

Trip Log – ICW Brunswick, Georgia to Belhaven, North Carolina

Boat: “Finally” a Watkins 33

Captain Paul LaPoint

Crew: John Myers and Scott Murphy

Goal: Move the boat from MM 680 to 20 miles North of 00 or 700 Statue miles up the coast.

MM 00 is in Portsmouth/Norfolk on the Elizabeth River.

Timing: John and Scott have previous commitments and must leave for home April 21st.

2009-April 6th Brunswick, Ga

13:00 - Paul, John and Paul’s wife Sylvia arrive at boat mid morning. We begin stowing gear and cleaning. We remove multiple cart loads of materials to make room for the gear needed to cruise.

16:00 Break for supper. Paul, Sylvia and I eat at a nice seafood place overlooking marsh.

17:00 Scott calls saying he has arrived in town. We return to the marina to see Scott.

22:00 We turn in.

April 7th Brunswick, Ga

We all go out to breakfast in Scotts Suzuki then buy some of the items we have identified that we still need. Paul buys a Skipper Bob’s ICW book on Marina’s and Anchorages.

I buy a book to keep a log of trip in. We spend the rest of the day stowing gear, Scott cleaned and filled the water tank and I mounted the dinghy motor bracket to the rear pulpit and I tied the dinghy down to the cabin top.

April 8th Brunswick, Ga

11:00 Left dock MM 680 on ICW. We are unable to pump head which is full and left over from fall because marina holding tank is full. Engine is not charging the batteries, battery voltage of 12.4 volts.

Running lights not working.

13:30 Position N 31 deg 6.9 minutes by W81 degrees 10.5 minutes

15:31 Position N 31 deg 15.81 by W81 deg

16:50 Position N 31 deg 20.8 min by W81 7.14 min

18:00 headed into Sapal Sound,

20:30 Completed anchoring in Johnson’s Creek, MM 628 a 52 mile run the first day. We used two anchors one fore and one aft, anchoring at the edge of the ICW.

April 9th, Thursday - Johnson’s Creek, GA to Sail Harbor Marinea, Savanna, Ga

7:30 Up and dressed, Paul trouble shoots alternator charging problem and finds disconnected wire splice. Repaired wire splice and alternator charges! Change Y valve in head to “Overboard” and we have a toilet again! Cereal for breakfast using high temperature milk & orange juice. Repaired grab pole at navigation station. Boat had flexed so much in the sea way that the post had become dislodged from pocket in ceiling. We had problems pulling up anchors due to wind being on our beam.

9:50 Underway after repairs. N 31 36.3 W 81 10.9

10:45 MM 624 ICW

13:15 MM 606 N 31 49.21 W 81 8.5

15:30 MM 593 Skidway Island Bridge

17:00 MM 584 Sail Harbor Marina. 44 mile run today. Parked next to Watkins 23 hull #

WYM231710177 The boat turns out to be the boat originally owned by Paul and sold to Conrad Chaney.

Also found Watkins Pilot house boat being restored. Mast and much of interior removed, otherwise the boat looked in good condition. Could not read the HIN# looks like WYM7P0_0V____. After showering, I returned to boat. As I approached the boat, I could hear that the engine alarm was on. I went and got Paul who was socializing on a nearby boat. We tested several things and determined the

key switch has shorted out internally. So for rest of trip we used the master kill switch to disable engine & alarm.

April 10th, Friday – Sail Harbor Marina, Savanna, GA To Harbor Town Marina Hilton Head, SC

9:30 MM 584 left the dock.

9:40 Paul is at the helm when the engine begins to loose RPM and starts smoking after about 30 seconds it quits entirely. We coast into Savanna Yacht Club docks which are under construction. Scott and Paul change the primary diesel filter and bleed the fuel lines 12:15 Underway again.

2:45 John Myers @ the helm, runs aground leaving the North end of Fields Cut. Winds are 20 Knots gusting to 29K on our starboard rear quarter, driving us more and more onto the shoal. Sky is clear. We wait for a rising tide. The Coast Guard Auxiliary come by but they are unwilling to come close enough to us to hardly talk.

4:55 A Canadian sail boat runs aground while passing us, right in the middle of the supposed deep spot! The Canadian boat is in deeper water but draws 1 foot more water (5 instead of 4 feet).

5:00 We break free on a rising tide, wave goodbye and motor off.

7:00 MM 564 Arrive in Hilton Head Harbor Town Marina. Only 20 miles made good today, 96 miles so far. We get a free bottle of wine with our slip! It costs \$2.00 per foot. The park has a special program for kids tonight. An outside bar a few yards from the boat has a live band. We have the smallest, oldest boat in the marina. For a huge marina with mega yachts there are only two small bathrooms (unisex) each a single unit with toilet, shower and sink. The bathrooms are located down a hallway behind a service door. Obviously only the “employees” of the rich and famous use them. Harbor is surrounded by Condominiums on 2 sides and shops, restaurants and hotels on the other two sides. I went for walk and behind the buildings, one block from harbor is just stinking swamp. The dirt from digging the harbor provided the fill to raise the rest of the swamp above water level so they could build high dollar condos on it. This is a place like Disney Land, Orlando built out of a swamp, totally artificial, like the guests!

April 11th, Saturday – Harbor Town Marina, Hilton Head, SC to City Dock, Beaufort, SC

10:00 AM Left Fuel dock after a much needed pump out, Ice and 12 gallons of diesel fuel. Sky is clear, temperature is cool in high 60's, winds south @ 10-15.

12:00 MM 545, N 32 19.167 – W

Things to buy: Mayo and 60' line for furler, 4" PVC pipe for anchor holder. Note to self from talking to fellow boater: Claiborne Young website www.saltysoutheast.com also www.underground.com good for weather and ICW info.

13:30 MM 534 Beaufort, S.C. City docks, down town marina. 20 mile run today Paul decides to stop to buy new furling line for roller furler which the outer skin has started to come off. Temperature is 72 and winds are out of the west at 10-15. Beaufort has a nice waterfront park with restaurants and bars opening on the park and onto Main Street on the other side. Scott and I eat lunch at a waterfront restaurant overlooking the harbor while Paul takes a taxi to buy line at West Marine. We bring Paul back lunch expecting to shove off but Paul has decided to stay the night and has already rented a slip. After Paul eats his lunch we all use the marina courtesy car to go to Home Depot and buy a 2 foot piece of 4" PVC pipe and 2 large hose clamps to make an anchor holder to mount on the rear pulpit to hold the Danforth. It is Saturday night so several bars have outdoor seating with music blaring to 2:00AM. I do laundry in evening and check emails while listening to music.

We walked through the town earlier in the day and saw many antebellum homes.

April 12th, Sunday – City dock, Beaufort, SC to Ross Marine, SC

Leave dock @ 7:30 AM, Scott is still asleep. Wind and current are on our nose. Boat is parallel parked on inside of bulkhead pier. Boats are ahead and behind us. Paul tries to back out leaving bow of boat overhanging dock. I fend off piling from dock then jump on bow. I grab for roller furler which spins and I fall back into water. A guy on boat next door, runs down and pulls me up onto dock. Paul circles

around to other side of dock and I jump aboard. Only my pride and my camera are damaged. My clothes are covered with little stick figures they call shrimp. I have to go below and wash everything out and change clothes. It turns cold this morning. We have to put on thermal underwear and foulies. I am a little stiff and seem to have sprained a couple of fingers and my shoulder in the fall off the boat and clamoring back onto the dock.

9:00 MM 529

10:00 MM 523

13:00 MM 505

14:05 MM 500 We are now 500 miles away from home.

20:00 MM 476.4 Ross Marine, next to ICW, Getting Dark, took an empty slip, no one around. Scott and I walked the empty yard while Paul filled the engine with oil and water. Looks like a working boat yard with just a few docks. No bathroom, lounge etc.

Made the Salmon Pasta for supper with Scott's help. 57.6 mile run today. 203.6 so far.

Shopping list: Fruit, bread, bilge cleaner, camera, flashlight

April 13th, Monday – Ross Marine, SC To McClellan SC

6:45 Left dock, Winds calm, cloudy, cold, temp about 60. Missed entrance to Eliot's Cut and went on down Stono River, had to backtrack 1.5 miles when we realized error.

9:01 MM 470 Draw Bridge closed, opening on the hour and half hour.

9:31 through bridge.

10:00 Sailed past the Charleston Battery. Very windy as we approach Fort Sumter. 20 Knots gusting higher. Wind is blowing the tops of the waves off and there is lots of sea foam in the water. We are being sprayed all the way to the cockpit.

11:01 Missed Ben Sawyer bridge opening. Anchored and waited till it opened.

11:31 MM 462.5 Through bridge

12:30 MM 457.5

14:15 MM 445

15:00 MM 440 Scott runs aground! Paul calls SEATOW US

17:00 Free and underway again after being dragged off bar by SEATOW US.

17:30 Begins to rain, Bimini leaks everywhere!

19:30 MM 430 Arrive at McClellan in the rain. 46.4 mile run today, 250 miles so far. McClellan is small sleepy rural town with only a few streets. It is surrounded by water on two or more sides. The main industry is shrimp boats. I walk through the town in my foulies, in the rain and growing dark. Eventually it gets dark enough that without street lights I have trouble finding my way back to the marina. The marina has a very large & Tall fixed bulkhead pier with a floating pier attached. We have to climb up and down a ladder to get to the floating pier. There are no finger piers. Between the bulkead and shore is a tidal basin that is exposed at low tide with several sunken boats lying there. The bathrooms are on the second story over a garage. Not exactly handicap accessible.

April 14th, Tuesday – McClellan, SC to Hazzard Marine, Georgetown, SC

8:30 leave dock in McClellan after taking on 2 blocks and 1 bag of ice plus diesel fuel. Today it is overcast with a rain threat, light winds out of South West, temperature in low 60's.

8:45 Engine quits as I (John Myers) am at the helm and we are in a narrow cut. We sail on the jib making 2.8 to 3.5 knots while Paul trouble shoots system.

9:30 After Paul changes primary and secondary filters, we are back under way using the diesel engine.

9:45 Engine slows again, this time John at the wheel keeps it running by slowing the throttle to idle and continuing to motor sail. We come to a very narrow section @ North Santee River & Estherville Canal. Overtime the engine can be increased in speed but again begins to loose power.

11:15 MM 415 Under Jib and engine idling in gear making 6 knots. Scott cooks egg & toast sandwiches, by toasting bread over open flame of camp stove. Then Scott makes Paul an omelet. Gale

force winds begin as we approach Georgetown, SC. As Scott goes forward to prepare dock bumpers, his visor blows off. We make two tries to retrieve it before succeeding on the third. Engine is losing power, more and more. Paul pushes momentary electrical switch hanging by its wires in the engine compartment. This switch energizes an electric fuel pump placed after the first filter, intended to help bleed the system. Problem is that if the leak is before the pump, then it just sucks in more air to system. Running pump does increase engine RPM temporarily at least.

13:00 MM 403, Arrive Hazard Marine, Georgetown, SC. Paul decides to pull in here hoping to find a diesel mechanic who can trouble shoot air leak. Boat is dancing at the dock due to high winds. 27 mile run today, 277 miles so far. First mechanic checked and bleed system but had to leave to haul out a boat. Second mechanic found the filter we replaced, had a dent in edge, potentially causing a seal failure and replaced some crush washers on a banjo joint used as a bleed point which might be leaking air. Scott and I walk through town and 3 miles out to Wal-Mart. We bought groceries and I bought a new camera to replace the one I drowned. We take taxi back to marina with our groceries. Grocery List: Veggies, fruit, bread, bilge cleaner, camera, flashlight (none on board!), hotdogs, and pasta. Note: we failed to buy the flashlight!

April 15th, Wednesday – Hazard Marine, Georgetown, SC to Bare Foot Marine, North Myrtle Beach, SC Overcast with heavy low clouds. It is cold with temperature in low 60's. We are wearing long underwear and full foul weather gear over clothes.

8:40 Leave dock MM 403

10:00 stopped at a private house dock and topped off engine oil and water.

10:30 MM 395

11:12 MM 390 Started with mist then light drizzle

13:04 MM 380 Rain stopped, put clothes out to dry

13:55 MM 375

16:02 MM 361

17:17 MM 354 Bare Foot Marine, North Myrtle Beach, SC. 49 mile run today, 326 miles so far

April 16th, Wednesday – Bare Foot Marine, North Myrtle Beach, SC to Carolina Beach, NC

We move to fuel dock and get a pump out and 8 gallons of diesel. John works the pump out suction hose. As he closes the suction hose it bucks and jerks and he gets sprayed in the face with brown water. He tries again and again he get sprayed in the face! He has to go below and wash himself and change clothes!

8:51 MM 354 leave fuel dock, Winds NE @ 10

9:10 MM 353.5 pass through swing bridge

9:40 Passed through little River Swing Bridge had to wait for sail boat "Joy" a Benateau raised saloon which had been docked next to us but left 15 minutes later. Bridge tender only wanted to open once for the two of us.

11:00 MM 340, Half way! Crossed into North Carolina, We missed the 11:00 opening of Sunset Beach Bridge. Must wait for 12:00 noon opening.

11:10 MM 335.5 Boarded by Coast Guard as we wait for bridge opening.

11:40 MM 338 Through bridge after Coast Guard requests bridge to open so they can get more "Customers"

13:50 Pass under fixed bridge State road 130

14:00 MM 322 Passing Lockwood's Folly inlet, currently sunny, clear blue sky, temperature ~ 60 and winds NE @10.

15:00 MM 314 Crossed into Cape Fear River

17:00 MM 304

18:45 MM 295 Through cut into Carolina Beach and Joyner Marine, 59 mile run today, 385 statute miles so far. Here the ICW is the closest to the Atlantic as anytime on our trip. The ICW lays along the west side of the barrier island which is only about 4 blocks wide.

Paul stays to work on boat, (add oil and water to engine) while Scott and I walk to beach. I have my foul weather gear on including my lifejacket under my coat. It is cool, almost cold even with all these clothes. The wind is blowing hard. We watch surfers in wetsuits for a while then walk to the fishing pier and have an ice cream cone. Winds build to 20+ near dark. We cook Kielbasa and sauerkraut for supper. The winds rattles the rigging and rocks the boat during the night.

April 17th, Friday - Carolina Beach, NC to Mille Hammock Bay, NC

8:30 Sunny and clear sky with winds N @ 10 knots, temperature 50 degrees with 68 degrees the projected high.

8:40 MM 295 leave dock. Took on 2 bags of ice and 7 gallons of diesel fuel. Scott again makes fried egg sandwiches for breakfast + apple and banana while underway.

11:05 MM 283.5 Through Wrightsville Beach Bascule Bridge after waiting 20 minutes for an opening.

12:05 Through Figure Eight Island Swing Bridge

13:16 MM 269

14:00 MM 264

14:16 Approach Surf City Swing Bridge. Must wait till 15:00 for opening. I go forward and talk to Cindi on cell phone, then take nap on deck. It is very cold wearing full foulies.

18:30 MM 244.5 Anchor down in New River Inlet, Mille Hammock Bay. 50.5 mile run today. 435 statue miles so far. This bay and area is a wilderness area that is part of Camp Lajune. We can see several areas made to practice landing craft/ amphibious landings. We see several old military half tracks used for target practice along the shore.

April 18th, Saturday - Mille Hammock Bay, NC to Beaufort, NC

7:30 Up early and start engine. Engine starts very hard the dies after idling for 5 minutes. Paul bleeds lines.

8:00 Upped anchor and underway, Pretty wilderness area here. 2 inlets shoal down to 5 feet depth on sounder and almost catch us but we do not touch bottom.

8:35 Reach the Swing Bridge which opens every half hour.

9:00 Bridge opens and through by 9:05

9:40 Paul is at the wheel when the engine again looses power. John takes the wheel, Paul goes below to bleed the lines while Scott runs forward to set anchor. We anchor along edge of ICW while Paul again bled the lines. Paul tightens fuel filter & Bowl using filter wrench!

10:00 Underway again. Paul is getting faster and faster at bleeding the lines! New record speed!

11:15 Engine again coughs and sputters while John is at the wheel. John backs off on the engine throttle sailing under jib with engine in gear at idle. Engine dies just before we enter fixed bridge uprights.

11:35 John sails through uprights on jib alone. We continue to sail while Paul bled lines.

11:45 Lines bleed and under power again.

12:15 MM 225

13:00 MM 220

14:00 MM 212

15:45 MM 202 Town Creek Marina, Beaufort, NC. 43 mile run today, 478 statute miles total. Paul buys two rounds at marina bar. There is no mechanic available until Tuesday so we must press on. Scott and I walk to see pirate ship replica. We have Chow Mein for Supper then go to bed early. This was a very stressful day for all of us!

April 19th, Sunday - Beaufort, NC to River Dunes Marina, North of Oriental, NC

08:05 Leave dock, slightly warmer this morning, still wearing Long underwear and coat but without the foulies. We motor back to the ICW from the marina.

08:45 MM 200 Back in the ICW!

10:00 MM 191

12:00 MM 180

13:00 MM 175 we leave ICW and head up Broad Creek. We failed to get ICE and a pump out last night due to overwhelming stress, so we need both.

13:30 River Dunes Marina & Housing project. 27 mile run today, 505 statute miles so far. After pump out and Ice, Paul decides to stay rather than go on possibly because this time he does the pump out and this time Scott is down below rinsing the head and flushes the electric toilet while Paul has the pump out hose attached but the vacuum turned off. The head pump pressurizes the tank and sprays Paul with brown water, now he needs a shower! This is Disney Land in the swamp again! Scott and I walk around while Paul showers, checks water and oil levels on boat. We ride free bicycles around housing subdivision. I peak in the windows of houses that are for sale. Brand new houses are designed to look Victorian with metal roofs, fancy cornices, 10 foot ceilings, painted woodwork, hardwood floors and windows which go almost to the floor. Marina will eventually have 400 slips. 600 houses planned. Area is about 6 miles from Oriental. Near Dark we take courtesy car to town and eat out at the Oriental Steamer.

April, 20, Monday - River Dunes Marina, North of Oriental, NC to Belhaven

07:36 Underway, Broad Creek., Warmer than in recent days, Rained about 6:30 AM for 15 minutes. Socked in low clouds, thunder storms predicted and high winds predicted, currently light winds.

08:30 MM 170 back in the ICW

09:15 MM 165 leaving the Neuse River and entering Bay River

09:55 MM 160 Entering Gale Creek, on and off rain all morning, squall lines all around us

10:20 MM 155 Upper Spring Creek

11:20 MM 150 Entering Pamlico River, following seas build to 2-3 feet, surfing down wind on reefed main alone.

11:35 MM 145 Entering Pango River

12:30 MM 140, The sun comes out but there are still very high winds.

13:40 MM 135 Belhaven, NC 40 mile run today not counting several miles travel to and from ICW.

Averaged over 7 knots all day! **545 miles for total trip in 13 days on the water.** It takes several extra large bumpers to protect the boat at the dock. Even though we are in a cut off of the river, the wind is putting large waves into the docks. The wind is whistling in the rigging! Sylvia picks up Paul and takes him back to hotel. Scott and I have the afternoon to ourselves. We walk through the town and visit an interesting Farm and Marine store, what a combination!

We see several antebellum homes. In the evening we pack our stuff and have it ready to leave at the crack of dawn the next day. It is 500 miles by car, back to where we started tomorrow. Looking back we missed our goal by 155 statute miles which we could have easily attained had we not stopped early for repairs on several days or been held up by running aground. On the other hand the early stops allowed us to explore several very nice places that we otherwise would have motored on by and missed.

Epilog: John makes it home the evening of the 22nd. Scott makes it home very early morning on 24th after loosing the engine on his vehicle and purchasing a 2nd vehicle to tow first one home. Paul single hands the boat to Yorktown, VA arriving Saturday the 25th.

This is definitely one I can cross off of my "Bucket List".