

Cruise Planning or the Great Lakes Cruise from another view

by Mike Bracket, fleet 130

This article is the second in a two part series on the Inaugural Great Lakes Cruise. In the September issue, Jim Hopewell shared his memories as a cruiser. This month, I will share my memories of the cruise from the perspective of the Cruise Leader.



Oqunquit (#10317) and Avery Marie (#15030) enjoying a morning sail. Photo by Debbie and Doug Keller.

I am primarily a day sailor and I do some club racing. I am not a serious cruiser and really only spend few nights aboard each year. I sailed the East Coast Cruise twice with Fleet 10 and our fleet participates in weekend cruises with the Clinton River Catalina Association here in Detroit. We had discussed cruising Grand Traverse Bay on Lake Michigan so when Rich Fox asked about hosting a Great Lakes Cruise I saw an opening. There had been a lot of discussion on the Catalina Direct List Server about sailing on Lake Michigan so I thought we might even get a few others to join us. I offered to organize the cruise and Rich accepted my offer. I really don't think I had much competition for the job!!

I downloaded the Cruise Planning Guide from the C-22 NSA web page and used it as my planning guide. Rich has done a magnificent job on the guide. Follow it and you can't go wrong. With the location of the cruise established, we began the detailed planning. Traverse Bay is not the "local" waters for Fleet 130, so we needed some insider information. I contacted Dennis Vitton who keeps his C-22, *Gentle Breeze*, at Suttons Bay. This was one of our projected stops. Through the magic of email, Dennis offered his local knowledge and suggested places to visit and confirmed my chart reconnaissance. He offered good suggestions on routes, marinas, places to visit, anchoring and more importantly, where you couldn't anchor. I decided that we would only anchor out one evening and spend most evenings in marinas. This completed the itinerary and basic planning.

I submitted the initial notice for the

cruise submitted to Gene Ferguson for the February issue of the MainBrace, highlighting the dates and the general agenda. The full-page notice with entry form was included in the April issue of MainBrace. I also sent email notices to the Region 4 Road Warriors and posted a notice on the Catalina Direct List Server. This part of Michigan closes up for the winter so I was not able to contact any of the marina managers until late April. I did have an old tourism guide for the area that included the phone numbers of the harbors. It also provided many suggestions for activities besides sailing.

Establishing the fees and deciding what to do with the funds was the next challenge. The State Department of Natural Resources sets the slip fees at all public marinas in Michigan. And they do not allow reservations! This would be our biggest challenge and caused me the most concern during the week. I contacted Tom Beaumont in Fleet 10 and asked him for some suggestions from the East Coast Cruise. I also contacted Bob Endicott and got some very good information on the Gulf Coast Cruise. I calculated the cost to stay at marinas 5 nights. I planned to provide two dinners, one the first night and one about half way through the cruise. Additionally, I made arrangements with one of the local wineries in the area for two cases of their signature red wine. They would provide a special label for us but as a cost saving measure we made our own labels. Each boat received a bottle of "Catalina 22 Great Lakes Cruise" Special Reserve when they arrived. After the cruise, we also provided each boat with another bottle for the rack back home. Total fee was set at \$125. I handled the slip fees at each marina as this made it a bit easier for the cruisers.



New friends who love to sail and shop - Denise Fox and Terry Hopewell. Photo by Jim Hopewell.

In late April, my wife and I took a weekend trip to Traverse City, the center of

our cruising area. Our mission was to contact the marinas, make the necessary reservations and complete the map recon with on the ground, face-to-face coordination. We confirmed the caterer for the opening night picnic and visited each harbor/town on the agenda. We gathered information and tourist brochures for as many attractions as seemed practical. This included numerous wineries and several artist studios, craft stores and quaint restaurants. I picked up maps from the local Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Bureau and a regional telephone book. With a cell phone and the phone book, I felt comfortable we could meet any need while cruising. I also contacted Lowell at American Illustrator and placed an order for T-Shirts. Lowell has some great graphics for Catalina's and he gave us a much better price than any place locally. I did not have to confirm the exact count until 30 days prior to the cruise so we were able to minimize the "extras" we had.



UFO, Jollymon, and Adventuring at provisioning for the cruise at Elk Rapids. Photo by Jim Hopewell.

When I received an application, I sent a confirmation letter and a package of brochures and maps. I maintained a contact list that included each person's emergency point of contact, name, phone number, email address etc. This would accompany me on the cruise and a copy was provided to each participant when they arrived at the start point. Each entry packet included the detailed itinerary and phone numbers for each stopping point. This was to insure everyone could be contacted in case of emergency.

I didn't know what to expect in terms of experience levels for the participants. Although most had never spent more than one night on the boat, all were experienced sailors. Most came from "lake sailing" and had never sailed in "big water". There was some natural apprehension the first morning but

(Continued on page 18)



(East Coast Cruise continued from page 17)

large sleeping deck at night. We have a sunbrella awning my wife made that encloses the area from mast to backstay like a tent. It extends down to the life lines. A bug screen for the fore hatch is also essential. Make sure you are ready to reef quickly. A Sun Shower hits the spot on a hot day. Put everything in Tupperware. A jib dousing line helped dropped the jib without going forward. I mounted a cooler behind the port aft dinette cushion to free up cabin space.”



Kim and Tony Orbeck march under the umbrella of crossed whisker poles after their wedding on June 28th during the 1999 East Coast National Cruise. Tony designed the T-shirts for the 1992 thru 1999 cruises. *Photo furnished by Kim Orbeck.*

Kim and Tony Orbeck who are former

Fleet 10 members now living in Florida and attended several cruises suggests “take small light towels instead of those nice big fluffy ones. Freeze Kool-Aid or water for the cooler — this keeps longer than cubes and gives you something to drink when it has melted. Reinforce your cooler top with foam insulation and put pillows and towels on top. Get a Bimini — it is worth any expense and avoids the hassle of getting round to find shelter from the Sun.”

Christopher Warren suggests that you “make sure everything is in good operating condition and have spare parts for those items that are hard to replace if they go overboard. The bolt and nut that holds the tiller to the rudder comes to mind.” Christopher also recommends that you bring sealant and outboard motor parts. “Outboard problems can really make your cruise a headache. Expect bad weather, at the very least rain. Bring lots of clothes for all weather conditions, especially if you don’t stop to do laundry. Biminis are worth their weight in gold just to keep out of the sun and to keep things cool as well as rain of off you. A bimini improves your comfort tenfold and any comfort on a small boat is cherished.”

Jan Chappel suggests that new cruisers need “to be really creative about how and where to store stuff. The interesting thing is that almost every Catalina 22 owner has a different system for storage of food, clothes and gear. Spend the money to get a bimini!”

“Take more than adequate sun protection” says Philip and Sharon Merlier. “Keep the water out of the boat. Be prepared for no wind as well as foul weather. Be prepared for bugs. Bring plenty of good food and drink. Be prepared for all contingencies and plan to be self sufficient. Pretend you are going camping – do not expect the Hilton! Have at least one large heavy anchor. If you have a kick-up rudder, make sure it stays down except for when it really needs to pop up.”

Catalina 22 East Coast National Cruise Organizers

- 1992 - Tom Anastasio and Gina Jenkins
- 1993 - Tom Anastasio and Gina Jenkins
- 1994 - Tom Anastasio and Gina Jenkins
- 1995 - Tom Anastasio and Gina Jenkins
- 1996 - No Cruise
- 1997 - Tom Anastasio and Gina Jenkins
- 1998 - Tom Anastasio and Gina Jenkins
- 1999 - Michael DeManche and Jan Chappell.
- 2000 - Jeff Martin, Michael DeManche, Jan Chappell.

2001 - Tom and Lauretta Beaumont

Next summer will mark the 10th anniversary of the Catalina 22 East Coast National Cruise. According to Tom Beaumont, organizer of the 2001 cruise, Fleet 10 is already preparing for the 2002 Catalina 22 East Coast National Cruise. Thank you to Fleet 10 and every individual involved for their continued support of the Catalina 22 East Coast National Cruise.

(Great Lakes Cruise continued from page 11)

this quickly disappeared. By that evening the apprehension was replaced with enthusiasm and confidence!

I think proper reception is a key ele-



Group Photo After Friday Night Dinner. *Photo furnished by Rich Fox.*

ment for a successful cruise. I spent most of the first day answering questions, helping rig boats and offer directions to the slips. Everyone was new to the area and simply providing directions to the grocery store, and the parking / launching areas got everyone off to a smooth start. Once boats were launched, Gwen Williams’ brother provided

courtesy Coast Guard Safety inspections for the fleet.

That evening we gathered for introductions and a picnic. While the caterer finished cooking, we introduced ourselves and I provided an overview of the cruise. We discussed safety and paired up the boats for mutual support while sailing. We conducted a safety meeting each evening. During the day, we maintained radio contact every hour while sailing.

As the cruise leader, securing slips for the fleet was a major challenge. Although I had spoken to each marina in May and then the week prior to the cruise, the marinas all operated on a first come- first served basis. This definitely caused me more than a little concern!! Each morning, I would call the next stop on the phone and tell them we were coming. Then I would sail directly there to arrive by noon, or as close as I could, to secure and pay for the slips. Each marina operated a bit differently but thankfully, we got slips for everyone at each location.

The last day’s sail was not too long and everyone was in the marina by 3PM. Some skippers elected to haul out that evening in order to get an early start the next morning.



Sloop De Jour, Jollymon, Aquaholics, and GunSmoke preparing for the trip home. *Photo by Jim Hopewell.*

For our final group activity we all gathered at a local restaurant for dinner, sailing stories and pictures. All too soon, the Catalina 22 National Sailing Association’s Inaugural Great Lakes Cruise was over and the participants were headed home with promises to meet again next year. When I offered to host the cruise, I didn’t know what I didn’t know. In hindsight, it wasn’t hard at all. Most of the work was done in a couple weekends. Local knowledge is important but not critical. I hope that after reading this you feel inclined to host a cruise in your area. It is a great way to meet folks in this great family known as Catalina 22 sailors.