

## Ship's Log

### Sundancer "Shake Down" Cruise

**28 July to 26 September, 2008**

Months of planning, acquiring gear and equipment, and a recent rush to finish food provisions, was about to pay off with a planned two month, 2,000 mile voyage along a section of the Inland Waterway, from Watts Bar Lake in central Tennessee to Cincinnati, Ohio. Called a shake-down cruise, because though we've put many hours on Sundancer (including the delivery trip May 2007 to bring her home from Louisiana), this was to be the last preparatory voyage before committing to live aboard for about two years while doing "The Loop".

**Sunday, 27 July, 2008** - Arrived Blue Springs Marina, Watts Bar Lake, TN river mile 548. Bo and Carole Gyzinski brought us, as a two-month absence would make too long a time to leave either of our cars setting out. We treated them to dinner at the Crow's Nest, then adjourned to Sundancer to complete the provisioning. Monty, not sensing what was to come, was his usual self. Delila, apprehensive about what we faced, was nervous, and this captain was simply excited about the upcoming adventure. We visited with new found friends who were passing through: Gene and Jan Boys aboard *We Be Blest III*, and Roy and Elvie Short, aboard *RoyEI*. We made a fairly early evening of it.

**Monday, 28 July** – 0630 hrs (all time will be recorded in CDT) left slip to fuel dock. Pumped out waste tank, topped off water tank, and pumped 375 gal. of diesel at \$4.49 per g. After final farewells, we were underway at 0812 hours. A beautiful, but somewhat muggy day. Two hours to Watts Bar Lock, we arrived at 1015 hrs, and were tied to the starboard wall at 1032 hrs. The gate opened at 1055 hrs, and we entered Lake Chickamauga. Made the cove at Sale Creek, TNR mile 495, by 1543 hrs, and dropped the hook. Fourteen feet of water had us laying out 80' of anchor rode, as some thunderstorms were forecast. Finished grilling pork chops and potatoes on the grill at 1833 hrs and enjoyed a delightful dinner on our first night of river living. We had anchored here in late May on a trip to Chattanooga with two other boats, and lost generator power when thousands of tiny fish clogged the water intake, causing overheat. This time we opted to play it safe, and killed the gen-set. It was a very quiet night.

**Tuesday, 29 July** – Early to bed, early to rise. 2100 hrs is the boater's midnight, and that's when we hit the sack. This morning woke just before 0500 hrs, and weighed anchor by 0545 under overcast skies. No fishies this time, so restarted gen-set for brewing coffee. Going downriver helped a bit on speed, and we made 8 mh at 1500 rpm. Made the Chickamauga Lock, TNR mile 471, at 0915 hrs and were tied to the starboard wall at 0930. A quick lock-through put us on Lake Nickajack at 0930 hrs, and we headed downstream toward Chattanooga. Passed the city

dock and Aquarium, TNR mile 464, at 1040 hrs. We had arranged to dock at the lake home of Ronnie and Jana Heiskell, so Ronnie and I could do some scheduled repairs. We arrived there, TNR mile 431, at 1445 hrs, tied up, plugged into shorepower, and killed main engine and gen-set. Trip to date engine hours 16.5, gen-set hours 21.5. Dinner with Ronnie and Jana, visiting on Sundancer, and to bed by 2200 hrs.

**Wednesday, 30 July** – Ronnie and I spent the day with repairs: 7.5 k gen-set primer nut washer replaced and no longer weeps fuel; engine room bilge pump re-plumbed and secured to floor; overboard ladder chocks shortened to achieve plumb; topside halogen lights rewired and now working. Grilled aboard with Ronnie and Jana.

**Thursday, 31 July** – Woke at 0540 hrs. Switched to gen-set and disconnected from shore power at 0712 hrs. Started main engine and cast off at 0723 hrs. Arrived Nickajack Lock, TNR mile 424.5, at 0803 hrs, where they were finishing up with a tow. Entered lock and tied to starboard wall at 0835 hrs. Cleared lock at 0850 hrs and continued downstream in clear weather until 1400 hrs. Weather then moved in from southwest, high winds and lightening. Chart showed channel to cove marked at TNR mile 377, North Saudy Creek. Attempted entrance, but past first channel buoys ran aground in 3 feet. False channel! Attempted backing out, but stern swung port, and tangled in seaweed. Full throttle for 30 seconds before breaking free. Returned to main channel and 25 to 30 mh winds. Continued south with lightening ahead of us. Short burst of heavy rain made visual navigation difficult. Made Mill Creek at TNR mile 365 and this proved a reliable channel entrance. Dropped anchor in 7 feet depths at 1700 hrs. Overcast with light drizzle, but sitting on aft deck anyway. Glad to be settled.

**Friday, 1 August** – Dove under keel to inspect from yesterday's snagging and grounding. Shaft fouled with yards of root from the plant growth we tangled with. Pulled that free. Epoxied aft hold bilge pump and float to sole. Weighed anchor at 0745 hrs after adding half gallon of oil to main engine. Now running 45 psi at 1500 rpm. Making way under overcast skies. Arrived Guntersville Lock, TNR mile 349, at 1005 hrs. Took 20 minutes to get response from lockmaster, and advised of over an hour wait for two-part tow. Entered lock at 1220 hrs. Cleared lock at 1259 hrs, making way into Joe Wheeler waters. Arrived Ditto Landing, TNR mile 334, a municipal marina in Huntsville AL charging 50 cents a foot. Tied up with main and gen-set killed at 1540 hrs. Only opportunity until Decatur, so enjoyed the quiet of no generator running.

**Saturday, 2 August** - Started main engine and gen-set at 0745 hrs, cast off at 0800 under partly cloudy skies and no wind – great change from yesterday. Making way at 8.4 mp at 1500 rpm. Negligible river traffic. Passed Decatur at 1130 hrs with a 15 minute delay for lifting of the Railway Bridge at TNR mile 304.5. Weather began deteriorating, even worse than yesterday, and we experienced heavy rains, wind and lightening (frightening with the 30 foot metal arms

stabbing the sky). Arrived Joe Wheeler Lock, TNR mile 275, at 1515 hrs, and told there would be a 2 hour wait for a tow. Heavy seas, poor visibility, continued lightening made the decision easy to go into the cove adjacent the lock (Second Creek), and follow back into a cove some 2 miles in. Dropped the hook at 1615 hours to ride out the storm. By evening, things had calmed, and an Alabama Marine Police boat was circling us. We went on deck to acknowledge him. Very friendly guy who was curious and offered help, if needed.

**Sunday, 3 August** – Weighed anchor at 0645. Clear skies and calm seas today. Made way out of Second Creek to lock. Running on 7.5k gen, which is spewing smoky exhaust. Will watch. Arrived Joe Wheeler Lock at 0700 only to find another 2 hour wait. Shut off main engine to drift for the wait. Gen set exhaust has cleared. 15 barge tow cleared at 0917, and we restarted main, entered lock and tied to wall at 0925. Gates opened at 0947 and on our way on Lake Wilson. A relatively short run to Wilson Lock, TNR mile 259.5, arriving 1130 hours. Pleasure boat that had locked Wheeler with us had passed us and arrived Wilson 10 minutes ahead of us. That skipper tried to convince the lockmaster we were further behind and he shouldn't wait. Not smart to argue with the lockmaster! He held the gates open for us and we made the wall in less than 10 minutes! Didn't need another wait aftertwice at Joe Wheeler. Out of lock at 1200 hours and made way to a 1<sup>st</sup> class harbor at TNR mile 230. 12 feet of depth. Same harbor as the delivery cruise last year, and I wanted Delila to share it. She agreed it was very pleasant. 7.5k is weeping fuel from a different point, so switched to 12k. We took a swim and enjoyed the evening.

**Monday, 4 August** – Woke at 0615 to a beautiful day. With less than three hours from our next stop, Grand Harbor Marina at Yellow Creek, we take our time. Omelets for breakfast (I cook), and some light cleaning. We weigh anchor at 0900 hrs. Made the marina, TNR mile 215, at 1145, and tied to the dock with engine and gen-set shut down at 1215 hrs. Peace and quiet of shore power and Monty ashore to take care of overdue business. The boy has yet to use the special pee box we built. In fact, it's the only place on the boat he won't even sniff, so it's been two days this stretch. From here on out, it will be new waters for me and Sundancer, as Yellow Creek is where the TomBigbee Waterway from the Gulf meets the Tennessee, the route for the deliver cruise. Now when we leave Grand Harbor, we'll head the opposite direction on the TN river. We plan on being here a couple of days anyway, so the agenda is to relax and enjoy.

**Tuesday, 5 August** – Taking advantage of the marina stay by taking the courtesy van to Savannah TN for shopping and lunch. On return, we did grinding, sanding and painting of the exterior overhang and starboard helm door. The spotlight, which had worked since replacing the very expensive bulbs before we left, has quit working. Spent some time trying to track down problem, but to no avail. We have 2 hand-held spotlights aboard, so more of a

convenience issue. Grilled our dinner and enjoyed first class ship's mess. Ready for tomorrow departure after fueling and waste tank pump out.

**Wednesday, 6 August** – Kicked on 12k gen at 0715m untied and went to fuel dock for pump out and add diesel. 300 gal of fuel and a pump out later, we started main and left at 0840 hours. Made Pickwick Lock, TNR mile 206.5, at 0940 hrs. Lockmaster advised a 10 minute wait and a portside tie up. Entered lock and tied to wall at 1005 hrs, clearing lock at 1028. Made 10.5 mh for first 5 miles in strongest current yet. Settled down to 8.7 mh balance of day. Made our planned anchorage at TNR mile 170 at 1430 hrs. Too early and arrival with benefit of stronger current, so we continued on. Made TNR mile 163 at 1530 hrs and dropped anchor at inside channel of Eagle Nest Island with long rode as depth was 25 ft. Quiet evening, and with all crew tired, turned off gen-set at 2100 hrs and went to bed.

**Thursday, 7 August** – Woke at 0550. Restarted gen-set 0600 hrs and weighed anchor at 0630. Underway at 8.2 mh in now somewhat lessened current. The predicted isolated thunderstorms have proven to be constant. Heavy lightening striking uncomfortably close with heavy rain, making visibility very limited. Passed our second dredger at TNR mile 140. Rain subsided by 0945 as we passed more dredging at TNR mile 135. Rain continued intermittently til 1400 hrs. Made a valuable discovery at TNR mile 100.5 with a low bridge. The CSX Railway bridgmaster hadn't answered my hail on channel 16, but finally did on 13, only then to advise lifting for pleasure craft were restricted hours. I came back identifying as commercial fishing trawler and he lifted immediately. No more channel 16, and now a different language as we'd heard the tows use in their hailing. Made Richland Creek Cove, TNR mile 88.5, at 1540 hrs, and went deep in til 8 foot depths and we dropped anchor. Day brightening with balmy breeze. Made 74 miles today, so hopefully we can have a light day tomorrow. Shut down gen-set at 2100 hrs and went to bed.

**Friday, 8 August**, - Woke and turned on gen-set at 0615 hrs. Checked main engine and added 3 quarts of oil. Weighed anchor at 0700 and back in main channel by 0720. Beautiful clear day, though somewhat cool. Still a benefit from current as we continue to make 8.2 mh. At 1213, we cross into Kentucky at TNR mile 49.2. Made way to TNR mile 36, and a small cove in Sugar Bay. This is Land-Between-The-Lakes country, and really scenic. Nice depths of 7 to 8 feet allowed for short rode. Serene and protected anchorage. Did some carpentry work on bulkhead by the head, covering the exposed shower pipes. Ground, sanded and painted more overhead over the aft deck. All three of us took a swim here, then burgers on the grill at 1915 hrs. Enjoyed a relaxing evening, turning off gen-set at 2230 hrs then retiring.

**Saturday, 9 August** – Started gen-set at 0600 hrs, and had breakfast, something we usually do underway, but plan a lighter travel day today. Weighed anchor at 0745 and underway in main channel still making 8.2 mp at 1500 rpm. Beautiful day. 0945 hrs at TNR mile 26 crossed

through connecting channel to Barkeley Lake on the Cumberland River. Doing this instead of the Kentucky Lock to Paducah KY will save us about 40 miles – nearly a day's travel. Made Green Turtle Bay Marina, CR mile 32, at 1015 hrs. In our transient slip with main engine and gen-set shut down and on shore power by 1030 hrs. Monty made shore leave, and very happy after two days. A screeching sound was obvious on docking that seemed to be hydraulic, coming from the rudder room under the saloon. Will check in morning as today was designated a vacation day. We all relaxed for the afternoon, checking out the ship's store and surrounding area on foot. Though the marina has a very nice yacht club, this is a festive weekend (National Marina Day), and the restaurant is booked. So, we're eating aboard again. That's fine as our cuisine hasn't really suffered on this trip and we have ample provisions. Nice quiet balance of day, and more normal bedtime.

**Sunday, 10 August** – Hydraulic reservoir sounds empty (stainless steel without sight tube), and the GTBM head mechanic did a cursory visual and concurred that it sounded like a hydraulic motor low on fluid cavitating, so we went to ship's store and bought all they had, plus took courtesy van to Wal-Mart and bought their inventory, 6 gallons total. Added this to reservoir and started engine. Screeching, vibrating noise continued. This time, Delila went below to check the rudder room, and discovered a loose chunk of machined steel creating a vibration against the bulkhead. She removed it, and the noise ceased!! I rechecked the hydraulic reservoir with a dip stick through the vent pipe, and now see that it's overfilled from the  $\frac{3}{4}$  tank marking on side. So, the mechanics aren't always right, but to date, Delila's batting 1,000 in the mechanical department. Used oil drain pump to bring it down 3 gallons, and put in empty oil gallon jugs. We may need spare fluid sometime in the future. Past 1330 hours now, and too late to go the next leg, so we decide to stay at Green Turtle Bay another night.

**Monday, 11 August** – Started gen-set at 0620 hrs. Separated shore power and started all electronics, then main. Underway at 0635 hrs. Arrived Barkley Lock, CR mile 31, at 0648, with a tow ahead, so we have a half hour wait. Entered lock and tied to wall at 0740 hrs. Left lock at 0800 and headed down the narrow channel linking to the Ohio River. Perfectly clear day with no channel traffic, and entered the Ohio River at OHR mile 922.5, 1140 hours, heading upstream for the first time on this trip. Arrived Smithland Lock, OH mile 918.5, at 1205, and tied to wall at 1220 hrs. Quick and easy lift of 25 feet, we leave lock at 1240 hrs. Made Hurricane Island at OHR mile 889 at 1700 hrs. Wide channel on south side of island with nice scenery. Dropped the hook and shut off main. Good current and favorable wind to keep us fixed parallel to shore. 65 miles and 2 locks today.

**Tuesday, 12 August** – Started main engine at 0700 hrs and weighed anchor. Underway at 0715 hrs making only 7 mh at 1500 rpm – going against the current now has cost us 1.2 mh. Next lock at OHR mile 846, and there's pretty significant barge traffic, passing half a dozen by 0935.

Arrived John T. Myers Lock at 1325 hrs, and lockmaster prepared immediately. Our second lock on the Ohio, and already greatly appreciate their double lock system that allows twice the traffic movement. With their barge traffic, it's easy to justify! Tied to the wall at 1340 hrs and underway again at 1359. Made Port of Mt. Vernon, IN OHR mile 829 at 1600. Quimby listed this as a courtesy dock recommending a call to mayor's office. We did, and they said come on, but it was apparent it was shallow and very small, with no cleats to tie up. We did make it though at just the depth limit, and a kind soul at the launch/dock area came over and caught a line and secured to the railing at the dock's center. Monty made shore leave and broke his 2 day bathroom hiatus, then Delila and I walked to a diner for dinner. Returning, found two fishermen launching their boat and engaged them in conversation. When they got back, they'd got a good sized channel cat and had nicely filleted it for us. Nice gesture by Scott Stephens and his friend.

**Wednesday, 13 August** – Switched to 12k gen-set to give the 8k a break. Started main at 0710 hrs and cast off. With nearly 5 days “in the bank”, we decided to quit early and enjoy the afternoon. Pulled into Inland Marina, Evansville IN OHR mile 791.5 at 1210 hrs. Pumped out waste and fueled 100 gallons of diesel. Tied up to transient dock, which is a converted barge (neat), and switched to shore power at 1250 hrs. WWII Navy LST-325 is museum at mouth of this small harbor, so we wash up, change and make a visit from 1500 to 1615 hrs. Very interest story: last operational LST in the world. Made 44 English Channel crossings during Normandy invasion, carrying troops, tanks (could hold 26 30-ton Sherman tanks in her hold, and tons of ammo and equipment) Old vets had brought her back from Crete in 1999 and restored her. Met most of the “crew”, and they all enjoyed our story with our boat, which was visible from the LST 325 aft deck. Returned to boat and grilled cat fish given us last night. On the greasy side, but tasty for river cat fish.

**Thursday, 14 August** – Switched from shore power to 12k gen at 0855 hrs. Started main at 0900 and underway 0905. Sounded single horn blast as we passed LST 325's starboard side, and the crew of old vets mustered at her rail to salute us as we passed. Making 7 mh at 1500 rpm. Arrived Newburgh Lock, OHR mile 776, at 1100 hrs. A real traffic jam. Ohio waters much busier with commercial traffic. We only had to wait for a short tow to clear the smaller chamber, while 2 big ones are lined up waiting for the large chamber. We were in the lock and tied to the pin by 1130, and back under way clearing lock at 1145. A short lift of only 18 ft. Dropped the hook between French Islands 1 & 2, OHR mile 767, at 1315 hrs, our planned anchorage. By 1430 we'd slipped the hook and tried to reset, but only sandy soil. Wind and current in opposite directions, so we weighed anchor 1445 and proceeded upriver. Made for Owensboro KY marina, but they're in transition with temp docks insufficient to dock us. Went back down river for a mile to city dock at OHR mile 756.5. A concrete breakwater and heavy ballards at 50 ft intervals. No power posts so we'll remain on generator. Tied up at 1650 hrs in

22 ft depth. Killed main engine. A longer day than planned, but securely tied with weather approaching, and Monty gets an unscheduled shore leave.

**Friday, 15 August** – Started main at 0715, untied and underway at 0720 hrs. Cloud cover keeping glare down as we head east, making 7.4 mh at 1500 rpm. Arrived Cannelton Lock at OHR mile 721 at 1210 hrs and tied to wall at 1230. Exited lock at 1245 and headed to Rocky Point Marina, OHR mile 719 at 1310 hrs, last opportunity for some miles. Tied to a converted barge dock and fueled the last of their diesel, 156 gal. Cut gen and hooked to shorepower. Provisioned at small store there and had lunch. Pleasant place with very nice harbor master. Will enjoy relaxing evening. Visited by gentleman who is building a light house a castle a couple of miles upriver. Took some pics of our boat to post on his web site. His first shrimp boat on these waters, he shared.

**Saturday, 16 August** – Started 8k gen at 0635 hrs and switched from shore power. 0640 started main and underway at 0645. Calm waters with reduced current, so made 7.6 mh at 1500 rpm. Arrived OHR mile 661.5 at 1430 hrs and dropped anchor. 20 ft. depth and just enough favorable current to keep us set. In a channel behind an inundated island just off main channel with no visible separation other than green buoy channel markers. Took a swim and relaxed.

**Sunday, 17 August** – Started main engine at 0720 hrs, weighed anchor and underway at 0730. Arrived 1200 hrs. at the last anchorage opportunity before McAlpine Lock and Louisville KY at OHR mile 630. McAlpine Lock notorious for making non-barge traffic wait a long spell, so the early stop is most realistic approach. It's West Point KY, where the Salt River at OHR mile 630 spills into the Ohio. A 25 foot deep river about 150 ft wide. Went back about half a mile, under a railway then highway bridge to the third bridge, which on the chart appeared best anchorage. Found a work barge grounded there with construction equipment, so decided to tie up to it. Secured lines and turned off main at 1215 hrs. Ground, sanded, and painted some more overhead panels. Delila hailed a fisherman on the river and asked if he would take Monty ashore, and he obliged. We had a relaxing evening, nice meal, and made an early evening of it at 2100 hrs.

**Monday, 18 August** – Started main at 0600 hrs and untied from barge. It's not legal to tie up to commercial barges, and we wanted to clear the barge before work crews arrived, though they'd gathered across the river at a fire. Made a tight 180\* starboard and headed out to the Ohio River. Fog as thick as proverbial pea soup til 0700 hrs. Making way at 7 mh, 1500 rpm. Arrived McAlpine Lock, OHR mile 606.5 at 0915 to find a considerable barge line up, and prepared for indeterminate wait. Hailed lockmaster and he will advise when we can approach. With our warning that this lock was tough on pleasure traffic, we were braced. Only one lock open with second under construction – only Ohio lock like this thus far. Surprisingly, lockmaster put us in

ahead of barges as we could get in quicker behind the exiting barges than those waiting. Tied to wall at 0940 hrs. Fast lift of 34 feet and out of lock at 1000 hrs. Made to Louisville seawall, OHR mile 603.5, marked for commercial only so Monty could make shore leave. Tied at Joe's Crab Shack at 1025 and Sundancer drew some attention and comments from walkers as Delila walked Monty. Pushed off and underway at 1045 making to first suitable marina, which appears to be Heather's on the River at OHR mile 589.5. Made that at 1300 hrs, switched to shore power and killed main and gen-set. Great on-channel dock with restaurant, Margaritaville style, so we had lunch there and paid for 2 nights.

**Tuesday, 19 August** – The dockmaster, Randall, was very gracious in loaning us his personal car as there was no courtesy car here. Went to town for provisions, including a case of Rotella T oil that the main is splashing around more than expected. Returned and performed normal maintenance in engine room, then sanded and painted additional over head panels. Of 28 total, now only 5 to go. Toured the Pluckeybaum boat yard where the first house boat was built back in the 40's. The first one was back in their yard, but terribly decayed. Interesting place. Returned to boat for steak and salmon grilled supper. Met a guy at the grill who was a captain of a corporate boat berthed upriver, and though obviously feeling no pain, made an argument for us stopping there (Madison, IN) after we take off from here. Even offered our tie up to that boat and free power, so we agreed. Made it an early night at 2100 hrs.

**Wednesday, 20 August** – Started 12k gen set at 0815 and main at 0820. Pulled off dock at 0820. Underway at 7.5 mh with slightly less current. Tried calling the skipper but only got a voice message. Made Madison IN, OHR mile 558, at 1230 hrs, but it was evident no one was aboard and there was no way to tie up, so we back tracked half a mile to the Light House restaurant main channel dock where they gouged us for \$1.50 a foot with no amenities save a power post; highest so far. Killed main and gen set at 1300 hrs and on shore power. Had lunch aboard, then walked through town, looking for a post office to mail some bill payments we knew were due. Nice place being revitalized. Found the post office, then an ice cream parlor where we enjoyed a nice cool treat to escape to heat. Returned to boat at 1520. Too hot to stay outside, so we stayed in with the air on full blast. Another early night, but later than the last few; 2230 hrs.

**Thursday, 21 August** – Started 12k at 0815 and disconnected shore power. Started main at 0820 and underway at 0825. Arrived Markland Lock, OHR mile 531.5, at 1145 hrs. Lockmaster opened immediately and we were on the wall and tied at 1200 hrs. Locked up and out by 1220 and made for Turtle Creek Harbor Marina, OHR mile 529. Pumped out and tied to dock with main and gen-set cut off at 1300 hrs. Nice little place run by older gent that seems to be a retired farmer or some such. Laundry, showers, ice, water, etc, and only 50 cents a foot; made

up for last night. Peaceful locale, and Monty enjoyed extended shore leave. Made it to 2300 hrs.

**Friday, 22 August** – Started 12k at 0855 and disconnected shore power. Started main 0900 and underway 0910 hrs. Another mostly clear day making way to planned anchorage at OHR mile 502. Last stop before Cincinnati. Arrived anchorage 1245 hrs and dropped hook, cut main. Sounder shows 35 feet depth. Let out 100 feet of rode initially to test hold, current and wind effects. Good, so let out additional 75 feet. Ground, sanded and painted final five overhead panels covering outside deck. Looks really good. Relaxed and enjoyed quiet balance of afternoon and evening. This is in a channel on the north shore by Laughery Island; uninhabited but fish camps and primitive docks line the shore. No one about.

**Saturday, 23 August** – Started main at 0730 and weighed anchor. Underway at 0737 hrs making 7.5 mh at 1500 rpm. Some excitement as we recognized landmarks along the shore, bridges and scenery. Made Cincinnati River Front Marina, OHR mile 471, at 1145. Only one other boat at this dock and no one there to oversee docking or get slip assignment, so we make it easy on ourselves and tie to the end for easy departures. Got an assist from the other captain, and tied to dock at 1200, shutting down main and 12k. This “marina”, which is really a single ill-kept dock, affords virtually no amenities save 30 amp power posts. But, as pre-paid, we’re here for the week. Note: the contracted stay was to be from the 25<sup>th</sup> through Labor Day, but underway we’d gotten a phone message that they’d made a mistake and Labor Day was \$5 a foot, 3 day minimum. I’d called and negotiated an early arrival and departure to avoid that outrageous fee. It was supposedly a mammoth weekend part with fireworks, etc. Too rich for our blood. Anyway, Monty made shore post-haste, and the security code for the gate was not what they’d sent us. Fortunately, the other boater gave us the correct number. It was immediately apparent that there was no direct egress or ingress for the dock. Just a dirty, graffitied sea wall, narrow concrete lip with boulders graded down to the water. Nearest parking is about half a mile under the Reds stadium upriver. We called George, and he and Bonnie joined us late afternoon as our first visitors. Hard walk for George, but he made it. We visited, then returned with them to their car for a tour of the Kentucky side and dinner at a wonderful seafood restaurant. Their hospitality softened the disappointment of the facility. Return was especially tough as a Bengals game was letting out, and all traffic was redirected. Got sent back over the bridge as a result and didn’t make home base til 2200 hrs. It was nice, though, and they promised a return visit with Larry along.

**Sunday, 24 August** – Spent day in engine room trying to clean up oil/bilge water. Scraped, cleaned and degreased stringer and hull joints of two sections under shaft packing and epoxied a seal to contain water so pump could activate before it spilled into adjoining sections. Messy job but ultimately seemed to work. Now, bilge pads can absorb oil without saturating with

water. We all took a walk downtown Cincinnati and enjoyed a frappacino at a sidewalk café. Hot and humid all day.

**Monday, 25 August** – George, Bonnie, and Larry arrived 1100 hrs. Visited and ate lunch (including shrimp, of course). Started 12k and main at 1200 hrs and pushed off 1211 to head upriver for a cruise. George helmed for awhile and really enjoyed it. For all, it was a first time look at the Cincinnati and Covington skylines from the water. Returned 1315 hrs and switched to shore power, killing main and gen-set. George took us all to the Kentucky side Wal-Mart for prescriptions and provisioning. Returned to boat late afternoon and after company had left, invited our neighboring boat crew, Ray and Linda, aboard for some drinks that evening.

**Tuesday, 26 August** – Finished sealing bilge area with additional epoxy and 3M 5200. Remains dry. With Monty left aboard, we took a walk to check out the Delta Queen, which had docked up river a half mile that morning. Got there to see new passengers embarking for a cruise downriver. Quite a boat with Victorian staterooms and large common spaces. Then downtown for an icy frappacino. Back to the boat and lunch. R&R balance of day.

**Wednesday, 27 August** – Walked across suspension bridge to Covington KY. Visited the seawall newly painted with beautiful murals of area's history. Downtown to Starbucks for frappaccinos and scone, a walking tour of historic district, lunch at Skyline Chili, then return to the boats. Josh Hart visited that evening. Been a long time since we've talked.

**Thursday, 28 August** – light maintenance and engine prep for tomorrow's departure. Dockmaster finally appeared and wanted us to move to an unacceptable location, so we opted for early leave. Karen Spurr arrived for mid-afternoon visit. A long time since we'd spoken. Then Delila's friend Lynn Spatz arrived followed by Earl and Gin Adams. We all enjoyed supper, drinks, and visiting til dark.

**Friday, 29 August** – Fired up 12k and main at 0700 hrs. Underway at 0710, making 8 mh with current now. Uneventful trip watching gathering weather. Made Turtle Creek Harbor, OHR mile 529 where we'd stopped on the way up. Pumped out, then to slip with main and gen-set off at 1420. Got two loads of laundry and back to the boat just as the sky opened up. It really poured. Good timing on our part!

**Saturday, 30 August** – Opted for a day off, so stayed tied at Turtle Creek. At only 50 cents a foot, probably cheaper than anchoring and running the gen-set. 8k gen-set running dirty oil already, so changed that and filter. Light maintenance and mainly relaxation. The fuel dock was quite busy and saw two really unique boats. One a house boat with pilot house that looked like a tow. Toured that one. The other a 1964 steel cruiser totally refurbished. Beautiful craft.

**Sunday, 31 August** – Started 8k at 0645 and switched from shore power. Started main 0650 and underway 0700. Made Markland Lock, OHR mile 531.5, at 0720 with favorable current and entered pretty quickly, tied to wall at 0735, but main engine wouldn't cut off. This maybe an hour or so after I told Delila, in bragging, that the wonderful old engine never wanted to quit! Opened to a lot of congestion: cable laying and dredging. Followed large tow coming out of long chamber for first mile til traffic cleared. Passed it, then made 8.5 mh. Made Heather's on the River, OHR mile 589, at 1500 hrs. A revisit for us. Shut off 8k and switched to shore power. Checked main in engine room and found that the bolt holding the solenoid thrust arm to the fuel cut-off lever had sheared or fallen out. Depressed lever and the engine shut down. Easy repair with new bolt, nut and lock washers. Also, the wire connector for the heat gauged had popped loose, so re-spliced that. Two simple, cost free repairs. Quiet afternoon with dinner at the outside restaurant. Visited with Randall and enjoyed the evening.

**Monday, 1 September** – Started 8k at 0850 hrs and untied. Moved back to fuel dock and added 325 gal fuel at \$4.49 per (best price this trip). Restarted main at 0935 and underway. Arrived Louisville-Portland Canal. RR bridge down for traffic, and had difficulty raising bridgemaster for clearance. Marine police circling advised we looked too high, but bridgemaster eventually confirmed 38 feet clearance, so we proceeded to McAlpine Lock, OHR mile 607, at 1145 hrs. Lockmaster hailed us, having overheard radio conversation with bridgemaster, and advised we move to lock, again past waiting barge traffic. Stood by in pool while barge left lock. Proceeded into lock at 1205 and tied to wall at 1214. Left lock at 1227 hrs, proceeded downstream making 8.7 mh with current. Entered Salt River, OHR mile 630, at 1510 and made way to barge that was tied there. Tied up and killed main engine at 1530 hrs. This time, no fishermen to bribe, and Monty refused the barge, so another long spell for him.

**Tuesday, 2 September** – This time, the workers crossed to the barge before we left. They were very cordial and even helped us push off. Started main at 0630, untied and made way out to the Ohio, where we made 8.3 mh at 1500 rpm with good current. Passed Blue River Island (inundated) at OHR mile 660 where we anchored on way up, but at only 1020, we decided to go for Rocky Point Marina, though that would make for an eleven hour day underway. Too early to stop so on our way. Arrived Rocky Point, OHR mile 718.5, at 1730 to find the wonderful owner from upstream visit had been foreclosed. We tied to the fuel barge again, killed main and gen and hooked up shore power. We're pooped. Won't be a repeat on this voyage! The man who sold the marina to the defunct owner appeared. He'd had to foreclose, but said he'd honor our previous rate, so we're at least secure for the night. Early night.

**Wednesday, 3 September** – Started 12 k at 0830 and main at 0850. Disconnected shore power, untied, and underway 0830 hrs. Cannelton Lock at OHR mile 721 in sight from the dock, so we made it at 0850 and tied to the wall immediately. Left lock at 0907 now making way at 8.2 mh.

Fast lock through, but first time I missed the target pin. Had to go down to number 4. Embarrassing. Arrived Owensboro, OHR mile 757, at 1330 and this time went straight to the seawall and tied up, killing main engine. After Monty tended to, took backpacks and walked into town to replenish liquor and tobacco. About 3 miles, but nice exercise and distraction. Did some food store provisioning and returned to the boat by 1515 hours. Some weather to the east, but only light drizzles at the dock.

**Thursday, 4 September** – Started main at 0825 and pulled off from dock. A guy had asked if we could try to pull his boat off the mud – had run aground 3 weeks before. We tried, but nearly got sucked aground ourselves, although it was only a 24 feet or so sailboat. Its fixed keel had really suctioned in. We undid the line and backed out: last time we try that! Underway at 0915 making 8.2 mh. Overcast with some rain and wind. Made Newburgh Lock, OHR mile 776, at 1115 and made immediate entry. Unfortunately, my target pin, #4, was missing and the lockmaster advised me too late. Went for pin #5, but a wind gust pushed the stern too far out for the mate to make the throw. Made pin #7, putting us right on the downstream gate. Now I know to ask first. Left lock at 1145 hours. Made Inland Marina, OHR mile 791, Evansville IN at 1330. Tied up and cut main and gen set at 1340 hrs. Plan some engine room work on 12 k – change out main belt. Too large, but will do til replacement can be bought. The LST 325 we toured on the way upriver is out of its dock, on the Mississippi doing its annual 30 day tour.

**Friday, 5 September** – Started 7.5k gen at 0940 hrs and switched from shore power. Started main at 0950 and underway at 0955. Making 8 mh at 1500 rpm. We passed the Delta Queen early today, tied up at Henderson KY. Arrived Mt. Vernon courtesy dock, OHR mile 829, at 1430 hrs. Tied up and cut main engine at 1430. Greeted by some friendly locals who'd not seen us on our last stop and after Monty made shore leave, Delila took some on a tour. We'd called our newly met friend, Scott Peterson (the cat fish fisherman from our upriver trip), and he and his wife will meet us this evening for a visit.

**Saturday, 6 September** – Started main at 0710 and untied from courtesy dock. Underway at 0715 making 8.1 mh heading to John T. Myers Lock at OHR mile 846. Arrived lock at 0900 hrs and made immediate entry. Cleared lock at 0935 and now making way at 8.3 mh. Arrived at our planned anchorage, OHR mile 901, inside Rondeau Island, at 1535. Hook secured and main shut off at 1610 hrs in 18 feet depth. Light wind and current working together for a secure anchorage. No maintenance or work, other than checking engine room and mechanicals. All secure. Quiet evening.

**Sunday, 7 September** – Started main at 0655. Weighed anchor and underway at 0705 making 8.1 mh. Arrived Smithland Lock OHR mile 918.5, our last on the Ohio River, at 0915 and secured to the wall, pin #2, at 0930 hrs. We cleared the lock at 0946 and headed downstream toward the Cumberland River. Made turn northbound at 1012 hrs, making only 6.9 mh now

against the current. Hoped we'd gain some steam between here and the lock, but actually slowed to 5.7 mh before reaching the lock. Approached Barkley Lock at 1515, and tied to the wall at 1540. Quick, short lift and cleared lock at 1555. Headed toward the night's dockage, Green Turtle Bay Marina. Arrived 1630, fueled and pumped out. Secured to our slip by 1700 hrs with main and genset off. Had dinner at Yacht Club with new acquaintances docked next to us; Frank and Joyce of the Daphne. They've been liveaboards for the past 23 years! Returned early to Sundancer and to bed early as we were very tired.

**Monday, 8 September** – This is a planned day of provisioning, so along with Frank and Joyce, we took a courtesy car to Paducah KY for a nice lunch downtown, a liquor store run, and Wal-Mart for gear and food. Leisurely day with only light maintenance and a visit and tour by Frank and Joyce.

**Tuesday, 9 September** – Still docked at GTB, and following Ken Bloomfield's recommendation, we toured Patti's 1880's settlement near the marina. Interesting place with varying degrees of quality in their shops and gardens. Definitely worth the time and effort. Went to their restaurant and enjoyed a great meal topped off with their Saw Dust Pie. It's a unique pecan pie with chocolate and coconuts. Returned and visited with Daphne crew, touring the boat and comparing equipment in their engine room. Performed basic engine room maintenance in preparation for tomorrow's departure.

**Wednesday, 10 September** – Started 12k gen at 0655 and switched from shore power. Started main at 0700 and underway at 0705. Out of harbor directly into the sun. Made the Barkley Canal, connecting to the TN River and reentered TN River at mile 25.5 on the Kentucky Lake at 0730. Making 7.7 mh at 1500, a big improvement over the last day underway on the Cumberland! Arrived entrance to Richland Creek, TNR mile 88.5, at 1600 hrs. Stayed here on way downriver last month. Water levels appear to be down from then at same anchorage point. Depth reads 6.5 feet vs. 8 feet. Dropped hook at 1620 and waited for boat direction to settle. Dropped aft anchor with 25 feet of rode and adjusted bow anchor. With such shallows, prefer to restrict swinging. Relaxing evening.

**Thursday, 11 September** – Weighed aft anchor at 0650. Started main and weighed bow anchor at 0700. Back in main channel and underway at 0715 making 7.6 mh. Uneventful day that brought us to Clifton Marine, TNR mile 158.5, at 1640 hrs. Tied up with main and 12k shut off at 1650. Monty, who'd been lethargic all day, made shore leave and appears fully recovered. Tightened shaft packing nuts, vacuumed bilge of 2 gallons, and added ½ gallon oil to main. Showered then relaxed for balance of evening.

**Friday, 12 September** – Started 8k gen set at 0650 hrs and switched from shore power. Started main at 0700 and pushed off. Making way to Pickwick Lock, TNR mile 206.5, at 7.4 mh, 1500

rpm. Arrived lock 1330 hrs. Lockmaster said to proceed and he would prepare lock. Instructed to tie to last pin on starboard side. Tied to lock wall at 1350 hrs and completed lock-through by 1416 hrs. Making way to Grand Harbor Marina, TNR mile 215. Arrived 1530 hrs and tied to transient dock with main and 8k killed at 1600 hrs. Tied behind a most interesting 40 foot tug. Took pics. Marina manager, Chip Lucas, approached us per a film being shot here tomorrow for the AGLCA roundup in October that he wanted our boat to be in. Asked if we'd stay over an additional night if he'd comp the slip for the extra night. We agreed, so this will be a 2 nighter: a surprise chance to relax and provision.

**Saturday, 13 September** – Went to town, Savannah TN, in courtesy car and enjoyed lunch out, some provisioning and visiting boat dealers in search of a small inflatable dingy to take Monty ashore when we anchor. We got an inflatable kayak at Wal-Mart and did get provisions. Returned to the boat mid afternoon and relaxed balance of day.

**Sunday, 14 September** – Awoke to 25 – 30 mh winds, remnants of Hurricane Ike blowing through. No let up by early afternoon, so we decided to stay put another day. Did engine room maintenance and relaxed and read balance of day.

**Monday, 15 September** – Started 7.5k at 0650 and switched from shore power. Started main at 0700 and untied dock lines. Underway at 0705 under much improved weather. Making 7.8 mh on TN River. Gen set oil pressure reading lower than normal, though is topped off. Add to punch list for when we get to Ronnie's. Arrived Wilson Lock, TNR mile 259.5, at 1245. Lockmaster is preparing for immediate entry. Hoorah! Tied to wall at 1305 for a 93 feet lift. Exited lock at 1335 hrs, which was pretty quick for the highest lift on the voyage. Had planned anchorage in a recommended cove TNR mile 266, but proved unsuitable; too deep, and we even struck something coming in. Decided to continue to the lock. Arrived Joe Wheeler Lock, TNR mile 275, at 1545 with gate open and a tow exiting. Slipped right in and tied to wall at 1605 hrs. Cleared lock at 1630 and headed to First Creek, TNR mile 277, to dock at Joe Wheeler State Park Marina. Arrived and tied to slip at 1710 with main and gen set shut down. Monty got shore leave and is happy for the bonus land fall. Breezy, but pleasant and slight chill. Enjoyed relaxing, quiet evening. Neighboring boat a custom 50 feet Hutchins built along 1950's lines. Powered with jet engines and the skipper says she'll do 35 mh!

**Tuesday, 16 September** – Started 12k at 0812 and switched from shore power. Started main at 0820, untied and underway making 7.8 mh at 1500 rpm. No locks today, so made good time to Ditto Landing, Huntsville AL TNR mile 334. Unfortunately, no docks with power posts available this time, so we tied up at 1600 hrs, killed main but left gen set running. No anchorage opportunity nearby, so a 50 cent a foot charge means we stay. Monty made shore leave, another motivator. Met some nice folks, including Bill and Mary Russell, retired college profs on a unique trawler tied to our stern. In fact, they'd been anchored at Joe Wheeler while we

were docked, and followed us up the river. They visited until 2230 hrs, a late evening for us on this trip.

**Wednesday, 17 September** – Started main engine at 0750, untied and underway by 0800 making 7.3 mh. Arrived Guntersville Lock, TNR mile 349, at 0950 to find a tow ahead just entering the lock. Called lockmaster and told it would be over 2 hour wait. Made to federal mooring cell and tied up, killing main engine at 1015 hrs. Patience is a virtue, I remind myself. 2 hours now, and the second part of the tow is still in the lock. Plus, there's downstream traffic coming down when he clears, then we can enter. Finally, entered lock at 1250 and tied to wall, pin number 5, at 1300 hrs. Harbour Reach from Ditto (Bill and Mary) and Integrity (the retro jet drive boat) from Joe Wheeler Marina in lock with us. Cleared lock at 1325, making 7.8 mh. Wait at lock changed our plans for the night. Now made for Mill Creek, TNR mile 367. Arrived 1575 hrs, selected anchorage and dropped hook, killing main at 1545 hrs. Took Monty ashore in the inflatable. He simply stood ashore looking at us for over half an hour with no effort to pee. All that for naught. So, we put him back aboard and rowed for the boat. More pain for Monty, but this time self inflicted.

**Thursday, 18 September** – Started main at 0650, weighed anchor, and underway at 0700 making 7.2 mh at 1500 rpm. Came through channel below Nickajack and CSX railway bridge was down at TNR mile 414.5, Bridgeport TN. Did not appear we'd have clearance, but proceeded cautiously as no bridgmaster was on duty. Close, but we made it. Hailed Nickajack Lockmaster 2 miles upstream to check traffic. Advised he had pleasure boats in the chamber, but would hold if we could make it within 20 minutes. Against current, hard to do, but we pressed to 8 mh and did make the deadline. Entered lock and tied to wall at 1530 hrs. Several boats that had passed us that day were in the lock, so their haste was a waste! This helped us make up for yesterday's lock delay. Cleared lock at 1550 and made way to Ronnie's dock at TNR mile 430, our planned berth for the next week for the repairs and modifications we'd been listing on this trip. Arrived Ronnie's 1630 hrs only to discover his house had burned to the ground this morning only shortly after I'd called him to advise of arrival time. Still, he had dock power for us, borrowed from the neighbor, so we settled in, killing main at 1640 and 12k gen at 1710 hrs and on shore power. Ronnie and Jana aboard to relax and calm down. What an incredible day for them!

**Friday, 19 September – Wednesday, 24 September** - Spent 6 days tied up to Ronnie's dock. Modified super structure by removing and shortening trawler arms from 25 feet to 17 feet. Clearance now 25.25 feet versus 33.25 feet. Cut off radar arch, lowering main tower by 4 feet. Removed aft hoist and cut off davit arms, which were overly sized for our applications. Likely reduced overhead weight by 1000 to 1500 pounds. Sanded and painted stern and port side to rail and scrubbed to water line. Power washed top deck. Nearly took off my right big toe with

errant spray from 3500 psi washer. Bruised and nail lacerated. Got spotlight working and Ronnie's dad installed on/off switch for engine room lights. A lot of trips to various supply, welding, cutting places, but with 6 days, we weren't rushed. Entertained Ronnie's parents and them, their neighbors who supplies power, and others over the week. Nice wind-down from our lengthy trip. Productive week.

**Thursday, 25 September** – Started 7.5k at 0815 and switched from shore power. Delila and Monty to stay ashore and go to home with Jana. Ronnie will crew to home port. Will be strange to lose my crewmates after this many weeks and miles. Started main at 0825 and untied. Ronnie used his SeaDoo as a tug, and pushed Sundancer's aft from dock. Backed out and idled in cove while Ronnie tied his PWC to transom and came aboard. Tachometer has ceased to work; loose wire? By this time, I know the feel of the boat and really don't need it, but would like to have it working. Made good time arriving Chickamauga Lock, TNR mile 471, north of Chattanooga, at 1410 hrs. Southbound boat coming through and a short wait. Entered lock and tied to wall at 1425 hrs. First time for me on this trip without Delila to secure us to wall, but all went well. Left lock at 1440 hrs and proceeded to TNR mile 472, Ernest Iglou's house and dock; a friend of Ronnie's dad. Tied up and shut down main at 1500 hrs. Ronnie's dad was supposed to be there to continue the trip, but was a no show, so after visiting, and in spite of high winds and current, restarted and untied at 1700 hrs. Ronnie again used his PWC as a tug, and got us off the wall safely and I made way to safe waters, where Ronnie again tied his boat and boarded. We continued upstream making way at 7.3 mh. Made Shady Grove Marina, TNR mile 487.5, at 1930 hrs in total darkness. No problem and won a bet with the new crewman per my ability to navigate to the marina! Tied to dock and shut off main and gen set. Grilled steak and zucchini for late feast. Harbor master showed up and we paid dockage and pumped out holding tank.

**Friday, 26 September** - Started 7.5k at 0650 hrs and switched from shore power. Started main at 0700 and untied. Returned to main channel and by 0710 making way 7.3 mh at estimated 1500 rpm as tach is still not working. Approached Watts Bar Lock, TNR mile 530, at 1300. No traffic and lockmaster commenced to prepare for us. Ronnie was feeling ill, and though concerned about successful lock through, we entered and tied to wall at 1325 hrs. Clear of lock and in home waters at 1345. Two months and nearly two thousand miles, it felt good to be near home. Took short cut at TNR mile 537, below Sand Island, saving nearly 3 miles. Shallow and narrow, but no problems. Made home port, Blue Springs Marina, TNR mile 548, at 1600 hrs, tied to slip and shut down engines, on shore power. Not happy with modified docking arrangement (a big house boat where I'd prefer to be), pinching us. Anyway, safely home and none the worse for the wear, except the ole pocket book. Post partem blues setting in and I feel somewhat depressed. Better at sea.