



First Time Cruise Planner Reflects on Destination '22: Charleston SC Cruise October 17-22, 2022

Photo by Liz McCafferty

By Liz McCafferty

If the measure of a successful Catalina 22 National Sailing Association (C22NSA) cruise is the reluctance of participants to pack up and go home, perhaps Destination '22: Charleston, SC will rank as one of many successful C22NSA cruises—even if our numbers were few.

Our “fleet” of three boats embarked on a five-night adventure that only whet the appetite for more time to explore. We enjoyed day sails in the busy Charleston Harbor, anchored overnight at an uninhabited barrier island, got a rare look at the historic Morris Island lighthouse, and a enjoyed a lunch date overlooking a charming fleet of shrimp boats. It seemed we just began to discover the group cruising possibilities and it was already time to prepare to retrieve the visiting boats.

Looking back on that experience, I’m mindful of lessons learned and the tremendous asset we have in the Catalina 22 National Sailing Association.

Cruising with other C-22 sailors is always remarkable. Whether you’re observing the way experienced trailer sailors solve common problems, or getting sail trim tips from the cruisers who race, the sense of shared challenges and intuitive solutions create a connection that feels like family. At least that’s how I felt after participating in a few C22NSA cruises.

(Continued on page 26)

(Continued from page 25)

But this was the first time we ever organized a cruise and I'll admit I was a little intimidated in the beginning. But, here again, C22NSA resources excel.

Although unable to attend this cruise, it was Anita Kjallberg, a former National Cruising Captain, who hatched the idea for Destination '22: Charleston, SC. We were enjoying the campfire on the beach at Big Lagoon during the 2021 Northern Gulf Cruise. Anita was keen to visit Charleston, and since we keep "Seanachai," (our 1986 swing keel) in a marina near the city, Anita was convinced we were the logical members to organize the trip.

Within a few weeks, current Cruising Captain Stuart Weist was in touch to see how he could support us in the efforts. He also recommended Cruising Club articles in the *MainBrace* with ideas for planning and promoting a cruise. Here's the link to the webpage: www.catalina22.org/index.php/cruising

Once we selected our dates (October 17-22, 2022), the next challenge was finding a location to securely store up to 10 truck/trailer rigs for the duration of the cruise. After a few weeks of research, we determined that an unstructured series of day sails with the home base of the Cooper River County Park and Marina would be the best option. Marina manager, James Fitzgerald was eager to welcome cruisers and was very accommodating. The facilities at the marina include: electricity and water at the floating docks, picnic area, bathhouse, and ship's store. Cooper River Marina does not have a boat ramp, but a public boat ramp is a short sail from the marina.

We met our cruising companions at Remley Point Boat Landing about noon, in time to help with rigging and launching the boats. Onlookers were impressed with Ted McGee's technique for raising the mast on "Rhapsody in Sea" and Robert Donehoo's clever dinghy storage solution when trailering "Wing'n It." By the late afternoon the boats were secured at their slips.

(Continued on page 27)



Ted McGee raising the mast on "Rhapsody in Sea" with assistance from Robert Donehoo at Remley Point Boat Landing Dinghy for Robert & Bonnie Donehoo's "Wing'n It" secured on the trailer. Photo by Liz McCafferty.



"Rhapsody in Sea" and "Wing'n It" at anchor Capers island. Photo by Liz McCafferty.

(Continued from page 26)

After a "welcome aboard" pot luck we reviewed plans for the first adventure of the week—a cruise to Caper's Island.

Capers, a South Carolina State Heritage Preserve, is a beautiful undeveloped barrier island accessible only by boat. It's about 15 miles north of the city of Charleston and marks the beginning of the longest contiguous stretch of protected coastline on the Eastern seaboard.

The next morning we were underway by 8am. Playful bottlenose dolphin greeted us as we began our sail from the Cooper River Marina under the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge, through the Charleston Harbor.



We motored up the ICW, under the Ben Sawyer Bridge, which connects the town of Mount Pleasant with Sullivan's Island. On that day, the air draft was 34 ft, and all three boats cleared the swing span without imposing on the bridge tender.

(Continued on page 28)

Clearing Ben Sawyer Bridge. Photo by Liz McCafferty.

(Continued from page 27)

Just after passing under the shadow of the Isle of Palms Connector bridge, a southbound tug and barge made an unexpected left turn without regard for our little fleet motoring along at about 3 knots. I was taken aback, but the skippers took it in stride.

We continued along, the quirky Goat Island on our port, past a flock of white pelicans resting on a sandbar on the starboard. At green marker 103 we turned into Capers Inlet. Within an hour we were anchored at the beach and took the dinghies ashore for a walkabout.

It was my hope to capture some photos of birds on the island. Capers is reported to be an outstanding birding site, boasting more than 294 species of migratory birds. I didn't venture too far into the island, but we did see a number of shore birds along the 214 acres of front beach.

The island's diversity supports a variety of wildlife including white-tailed deer and alligators. I did see some deer hoof prints in the sand and a curious ghost crab posed for a few pictures.

Caper's "bone yard beach" created by years of erosion leaving a "graveyard" of dead trees makes for some dramatic images, too.

Just as the sun was setting, we enjoyed a campfire on the beach and the opportunity to get to know two long-serving members of C22NSA, Ted and Dora McGee. In 2016, the Association presented the couple with a Lifetime Achievement Award for 25 years of exceptional contributions to the group.

Readers of the *MainBrace* will recognize Ted as a regular contributor and former webmaster. He has written scores of articles and provided outstanding photos illustrating C22 adventures. He's been Commodore, Secretary/Treasurer of the National Sailing Association, and Region 3 Commodore (among other things!)

(Continued on page 29)



Above: Dead trees on "boneyard beach" Capers Island. Photo by Liz McCafferty.

Below: Eric and Liz McCafferty enjoying sunset campfire on Capers Island. Photo by Dora McGee.



(Continued from page 28)

Dora has served as Secretary/Treasurer for the Association since 2005. They travel extensively to support one-design regattas, serving on race committee teams. Dora's expertise as a timekeeper is one of the many skills that earned her the 2021 US Sailing John H. Gardiner, Jr. One-Design Service Award. In 2006 she received the US Sailing Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal for her role in the rescue of sailors during the Dixie Sailing Club's Punchbowl Regatta.

Robert and Bonnie Donehoo who traveled with their pups, Willie Nelson and Minnie Pearl, matched Ted and Dora's interest in and support for the Destination '22: Charleston SC cruise. A long time C22NSA enthusiast, Robert Donehoo was recognized with Sandy Kennedy "Spirit" Award in 2005. Robert & Bonnie were named Cruising/Sailing Family of the year in 2017.

It's easy to travel with such seasoned sailors --especially when we decided to make a near coastal trek through the jetties at the entrance to Charleston Harbor. Weather conditions were predicted to be perfect for a sail to Morris Island to see the brick lighthouse.

(Continued on page 30)



Rhapsody in Sea and Morris Island Light house reflected in calm water. Photo by Liz McCafferty.

(Continued from page 29)

So, after I picked Ted's brain for some tips to make better images, we set out for a photo op with one of the area's historic landmarks.

The current structure is the third lighthouse to occupy this site, built just after the War Between the States. Construction started in 1872 and it took four years to build. The light was operated for the first time on October 1, 1876. The tower leans slightly toward the North East. Locals believe it has done so since the earthquake of 1886.

By 1938 erosion threatened the structure. Originally constructed 1200 feet onshore, the tower was at the water's edge. The light keeper's house was dismantled and the lighthouse was automated on June 22, 1938. The Army Corps of Engineers built a sheet steel bulkhead around the base of the lighthouse to protect against further loss.

Morris Island lighthouse was decommissioned in 1962 and was replaced by the Sullivan's Island lighthouse. In 1965, the Federal Government sold Morris Light to a private citizen as surplus property. Soon after, the Coast Guard slated the lighthouse for demolition. A group of concerned citizens, led by Senator Strom Thurmond and Representative L. Mendel Rivers, together with the Preservation Society of Charleston, worked to suspend Coast Guard plans.



*Wing'n It and Morris Island Light house reflected in calm water .
Photo by Liz McCafferty.*

Ultimately, Save the Light, Inc., a citizens group, purchased the lighthouse for \$75,000. The organization transferred ownership to the State of SC Department of Natural Resources. It was leased it back to Save the Light for 99 years with the charge of coordinating the stabilization, erosion control and restoration of the light house, and to raise the necessary funds for that work.

I never saw Morris Light reflected in a flat calm ocean. To capture the images with our fellow C22 cruisers was one of the highlights of our adventure.

(Continued on page 31)



Ted McGee takes a photo of our three C-22s tied up at the day dock on Shem Creek. Photo by Liz McCafferty.

(Continued from page 30)

Our final sailing day led us to the free day dock at Shem Creek. We walked along the boardwalk for an up-close-and-personal look at the shrimp boat fleet and enjoyed a group lunch at one of the popular restaurants there.

(Continued on page 32)



Fisherman repairs shrimp nets aboard shrimp boat in Shem Creek. Photo by Liz McCafferty.



*Robert & Bonnie Donehoo with Willie and Minnie in a stroller make new friend along the boardwalk in Shem Creek.
Photo by Liz McCafferty.*

(Continued from page 31)

Shem Creek flows through Mount Pleasant, and according to historians, the name is derived from a Native American word “Shemee,” given by the Sewee Indians, who once lived along its banks.

Shem Creek has a long history as a working creek, beginning in the 1740s. Mills and factories operated on its banks until commerce ended with the Civil War. By the beginning of the 1900s the local seafood industry began to take shape. By the mid-1940s shrimping in the area had grown and several seafood companies were established on Shem Creek. Dozens of shrimp boats lined its shores.

More recently, government regulations, cheap imported shrimp, and illegal shrimping makes it difficult for local shrimpers to make a living on the waters. The fleet is smaller, but nonetheless charming to observe.

Shem Creek remains a favorite place for tourists and locals alike. In October 2011 the town of Mount Pleasant opened a 2,200-foot-long boardwalk along the creek. The boardwalk is part of the Shem Creek Park, which is both recreational as well as educational. Plaques along the boardwalk describe the wildlife one may encounter and facts about the shrimping industry. The free day dock is a welcome addition for boaters.

In the late afternoon light, we sailed under the Ravenel Bridge and back to the marina; “Rhapsody in Sea” and “Wing’n It” in the lead. Too soon it was the end of the cruise. We swapped stories on the dock, already looking forward to the next time we would sail together.

(Continued on page 33)

(Continued from page 32)

In the morning before retrieving “Rhapsody in Sea” and “Wing’n It”, there was one final photo op. We happily added our names to the C22NSA cruising banner; all participants declaring Destination '22: Charleston SC a success.

Top photo: Rhapsody in Sea sailing under Authur Ravenel, Jr. Bridge. Photo by Liz McCafferty.

Bottom photo: C22NSA Destination '22: Charleston SC cruisers pose for group photo at the Cooper River Marina before retrieving boats. (l-r) Liz & Eric McCafferty, Bonnie & Robert Donehoo, Dora & Ted McGee, and Willie and Minnie. Photo by Ted McGee.

