

The Shakedown Cruise

Our shakedown cruise was going to be a little different. We wanted to go and visit my brother in Massachusetts for a while and then do a little traveling. Bonnie had spent a lot of time the previous winter on a route that she wanted to do that would end up back at my brother's for his 4th of July party. We had arbitrarily set a date of June 1st to be in Mount Carleton Provincial Park in Northern NB. Mount Carleton was not far from where my wife grew up and she had never been there. It was time to correct that.

It was the first week of May 1999, our apartment in Antigonish Nova Scotia was empty, and it was time to go. What are we going to do between the first of May and the first of June? We consider home to be Oromocto NB since our house is there. (I took a one year appointment to be a Lecturer in the Department of Information Systems at Saint Francis Xavier University.) Since weather can be quite unpredictable in the Maritimes in May and almost NO campgrounds are open before June, staying in the Maritimes seemed like a bad idea but we had family and friends we could visit.

We stopped in Sussex Corner to visit my mother for a few days just as she was heading off to St. Catherine's Ontario to visit my brother for a few days. When she left so did we, ending up in Oromocto to visit with our neighbors for a day or two. They are real RVers, they have had an RV for years. They helped us a lot when we bought ours and gave us a lot of good advice. We drove through to Fredericton (all of 15 minutes) the next day and since I had a couple of things I wanted to do on the RV we got them at a local Canadian Tire store and rather than go to Oromocto, we decided to stop at the Fredericton Boat Club where our boat is. My wife figures that I was just missing the boat club and wanted to visit. She is usually right about these things. She visits a fair amount too. Within minutes of arriving at the club we had several people visiting and looking over the new "land yacht".

Practically the second person asked "Your staying the night here, right!" The club usually has a problem at the first of the year with someone breaking into the boats when they are first in the water. We seem to have at least one incident a year of vandalism or burglary. I was a victim one year when tool boxes, radios, and safety equipment were stolen. We settled up next to a power outlet and was there for the night. We visited with friends got a few things done on the RV and it was nice to be back in the boatyard. The Millennium Odyssey was resting high and dry for the year. We visited with other friends and played tourist in the town where we studied and worked for over twenty years. We walked and talked and visited our favorite restaurants, running into old friends who came back to see "Millie". We spent a little over nine months of paperwork getting our sailboat federally registered. She is officially called "Millennium Odyssey". The name came from a combination of retiring in the new millennium and the traveling Bonnie and I wanted to do. Since we have a habit of nicknaming our vehicles, our RV kind of became "Millie"

"Millie" is a 1988 Sterling made by Glendale, just over 10 years old as I write. She is 27 feet according to the model but 28 ft long if you have to pay ferry passage by feet. Low mileage and lots of space to have company. We enjoy having visitors and expected to have several people visit us during the year of our trip.

We ended up finding a number of excuses to stick around for a couple of days and we both knew if we didn't get out of town soon we would end up spending the month of May in the boatyard. It was time to cast off the mooring line and make way. We unplugged the power and made our way out of the boatyard. We stopped at the top of the hill and looked for traffic, none. I hesitated and we both seemed to be looking for an excuse to stay a "little longer", silence. We turned onto the Lincoln Road, down the

Vanier Highway and were off on our shakedown cruise. We wanted to get some distance from home just to make sure turning back was harder. We drove until 9pm finally stopping in Bar Harbour Maine.

Subject: Down in the USA.

Date: Tue, 18 May 1999 23:16:05

Bonnie and I spent more time in Fredericton and area than we expected. But we are finally in Mass. We spent a couple of days getting to Mass. Our first night was in Bar Harbour. We stayed in the Bar Harbour Narrows Campground. By the time we got there it was 9pm local time and dark. We found a spot near the water and tried to plug into the power. It didn't work as soon as we plugged in it popped the Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlet. The same thing had happened before so we knew we really did have something wrong in the wiring.

We stopped at the Bar Harbour Narrows Campground because it advertised LOW LOW Off Season rates. Considering that we had used enough power to recharge the laptop, and used a flat spot on the ground, I thought \$35 US was a bit expensive. This was our first lesson about being very careful where you park in an RV park. The flat spot right in front of us would have cost \$25US.



Bonnie looking out the window at Fort Knox Maine.

We drove down Route 1 through to Bucksport ME. and stopped at Fort Knox. A historical fort overlooking the Penobscot River that is being reconstructed. It is incredible. You need a flashlight to roam around the walls and get into the fort. It really is worth a stop. We roamed around for several hours, and made it most of the way around inside the fort. It was constructed of granite and very well preserved and restored.

We spent enough time that it was almost 9pm by the time we pulled into my brother John's. We popped John's GFCI and spent the night on our own power.

Friday, I spent most of the day trying to figure out why we are popping GFCIs. I ended up chasing down the problem to the ground wire in the outlet for the Microwave. The ground wire ended up being too long and with the route it took would contact the white wire on the side of the outlet. Once this was rerouted the problem went away and we are now hooked into the GFCI outlet at John's. We knocked off 3 or 4 other little problems as well. We had very few of these maintenance days. I waited until we had two or three small jobs that needed repair and we just didn't have that many things go wrong.

Saturday we went into Boston with John and Dawn. (My Nephew and his wife). They gave us a great tour of the North end of Boston. Including the Quincy market, State buildings, Boston Common, by Paul Revere's house, and a section of the Freedom Trail. Boston is full of interesting architecture and history. We had a great walk around and were back out of the city via the T (subway) to the parking lot.

Sunday was a family day and for lunch John, Bonnie and I went to Elliot's Hot Dogs, supposed to be the best hot dogs anywhere. Well they were good. But what was REALLY good was the Sweet potato french fries!!!. Brother John made up a great feed of wings, and smoked ribs, Millie (John's wife) made

a great egg salad. John (my brother) and Millie, John(my nephew) and Dawn, Melanie (my niece) and Jason (Melanie's friend) had a great feed.

Tuesday May 18, we went to Old Sturbridge Village. It is a lot like Kings Landing on a smaller footprint. Compared to OSV, Kings Landing in New Brunswick has nothing to be ashamed of.

Subject: Walden Pond, North Bridge, and the Salem Witches.

Date: Sun, 23 May 1999 20:07:23

Bonnie and I spent the week touring around the Chelmsford area. The National Geographic Trip Planner we have lists 73 historic attractions within 50 miles including Bunker Hill Memorial, Salem, Boston, Walden Pond, North Bridge, and Whistler's Art Gallery.



Thoreau leaving his cottage at Walden Pond

We didn't see 5% of the stuff available. It was an interesting week.

Walden Pond is a fresh water lake that is used as a recreation area for Boston and surrounding areas. The entire lake is protected as a park and you can walk all the way around the lake. We did. It is about a half mile long (according to the brochure) and a little over half that wide in it's widest spot. There were 2 school bus loads of kids there so it wasn't crowded at all. They were a few canoes and boats with electric motors, and several fisherman. One guy had a real neat outfit. It looked like a combo hip waders, swimming pool furniture, and a scuba fins. He was sitting down in this rig that look like they strapped on like hip waders. But he maneuvered using the fins. Cute idea. They have a recreation of Thoreau's Cottage near the parking lot. With a sculpture of Thoreau leaving it. The original site is at the far end of the lake off on the right hand side. They have markers to mark the site.

On our way home we stopped at North Bridge. The North Bridge is where the first shot of the American Revolution was fired. There are a number of plaques and LARGE chestnut, maples, oaks and dogwood trees. The mansion had wonderful gardens and flowering trees.

We went to Salem to see the witch story. I never realized that Salem such a rich naval history. Salem has a red line painted on the sidewalk that guides you around the town. We took a tour of the Witch's Dungeon, and the Pirate's Museum. I would recommend the Witch's Dungeon but the Pirate's Museum was so-so. They gave a good local flavor the Piracy industry but it wasn't a great site. If you have never seen a piracy museum it would be worth the tour.

One of the stops on the sidewalk tour is the Salem Burial Ground. One of the graves is Bowditch's father. We left Salem at about 4pm in the afternoon. We were warned that traffic starts about 3pm and is bumper to bumper on the interstate until about 7pm. We did a cross country trip to Chelmsford, avoiding the interstates all together. St. Bonnie The Navigator came through, including a "Route 114 closed find alternate routes." WOW. It was a slick trip. We stopped in Harold Parker State Forest to

stop at the camp site to dump our tanks. Mass is not overpopulated with dump sites.

When we left Massachusetts, we drove up to Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire and around the west and north sides of the lake. Almost all power boats but a few small centerboard sailboats. We drove through North Conway, outlet malls after outlet malls after outlet malls Neither one of us was interested in stopping to shop. We spent a year packing and storing and we just DON'T WANT ANYTHING MORE.

The RV is acting pretty good. We have a reading light that is misbehaving (over my head at the moment) so on our next maintenance day we will have to take it apart.

Subject: On the road again

Date: Mon, 24 May 1999 22:40:37

We arrived at Dolly Copp State Park Campground about 4:30 and went for a walk then had a light supper and we both fell asleep for a couple of hours, by 7:30 we were both awake again. Bonnie did the dishes while I watched the world go by. She has gone to bed again (by 830) and I am working on the travel journal.

It was just as dark here in the forest at 4 as it is a 7, Now it is pitch black out there, and RAINING REAL HARD. We fixed one leak we found at Johns (seal around the locker where the tools are.) And found another this morning (back window). Kind of like deck leaks, they are rather continuous things as soon as you get rid of one another seems to instantly appear.

Subject: Won't FIT

Date: Tue, 25 May 1999 20:24:25

Well we were planning on being in Baxter state park tomorrow night and we plan on spending at least a couple of nights.

Well, we had our first case of we just won't fit: Baxter State Park in Maine. To get in, the Maximum measurements are 9' high 7 wide and 22 long. We are over 10 High 8 wide and 28 long.

The campground lady says people are real good about picking up hitchhikers!! (Don't think so moose.)

We are in a campground called Hidden Springs just outside the park. This is its second year. It is not quite done yet. And I doubt there are too many level spots in the place we are actually in a pretty good spot (level wise). But our bedroom is encroaching on the road in back and our nose is pushing the road in front. We have a great view of the shower building. There is a BIG RIG with trailer off to our left hand side (A Bouncer for RV types) The nose is down at least 4 feet on the tail and the trailer nose is higher than the tail. Looks like they just crested a hill.

The road out is a little rough. Millie is not your ideal off road machine.

All in all it is not a bad spot. Quiet, CLEAN and NEW showers and Bathroom stuff. (FREE too!) They have a buy one get one free nights so for \$18US plus tax we could stay 2 nights. We were going to do a hike in Baxter but if we can't get in we may just continue on to Fredericton tomorrow. This would give us a couple of days for business rather than just one. Probably a good idea. Given that most of the boats are probably in the water, they probably wouldn't mind us spending a night or two in the boat club.

We had a pretty strong cross wind for a little while in the afternoon. No fun at all but we survived, and for the most part it was a pretty good day of traveling. We did more than our 4 hour max of traveling per day but we are really heading home for business. The scenery from NH to ME along route 2 is really pretty and I would recommend it to anyone.

Subject: Back Home for the loop to Quebec

Date: Fri, 28 May 1999 19:06:20



At home in the boatyard

We were back in Fredericton for a night and stayed in the boatyard. It was nice to see the boats in the water. We had lots of visitors and saw a friend's new boat. We took the RV to a mechanic friend of ours and he checked her out pretty good. Everything seems to be ship shape. We made it back to the boat yard by 2 so we were able to be crew on a couple of boats. Norman Raine took Bonnie and I went with Layton McClare. They had a bunch of visiting dignitaries. Most of which had never been on a boat before so we went as crew. The day was almost what some people call PFC (P.. Flat Calm.)

We did get out on the water. Probably our only sail for a year. (sigh). Anyway we got off the boat and jumped into Millie for a run to my mother's place in Sussex. We are now visiting with them. Our visit in the boatyard did remind us that the Charity Race is this weekend so we will probably come back to the boat club for Sunday and then we are going to be heading toward the Gaspé coast.

We are on planning on spending a night or two at Mount Carleton then swing through Campbellton and around the coast of the Gaspé. With any luck we will have a visit with a friend in Gaspé before we continue on.