

LOG of 'MIMI'

VOLUME 3

BALTIMORE TO MARATHON, FLORIDA KEYS FALL, 2003

CHAPTER ONE – JOHN HOWE VISIT, 6-26- 2003

Baltimore, MD

Inner Harbor (East) Marina Chesapeake Bay

September 26th Friday

Inner Harbor East, Baltimore, MD [Mid 60's – Low 80's, Clear, Light & Variable Winds]

Betty, Jim, and John Howe arrive in Baltimore 7PM from Raleigh, NC after judging homes at the Raleigh Home Parade. This is a big event held over 3 days, showcases 357 homes, ranging from \$130's to \$4 million. Betty and Jim are part of the national Home Builders judging team and have the honor of judging homes for these big events. This was John's first homes judging event.

Thanks to Ken Britton, he had MIMI's lights on for us, so we did not have to stumble around in the dark getting the boat open. It felt so good to be back on board.

September 27th Saturday

Inner Harbor East, Baltimore, MD [Mid 60's – Mid 80's, Cloudy & Windy]

Forecast was for rain and thunderstorms, so after cruising the harbor and a little trip out on the bay, we headed back when the storm clouds started gathering. It turns out to be a false alarm, everything clears out and we have a very nice evening. We of course had to get our steamed crab fix, so headed to MO's to get John familiar with Chesapeake blue crab. As usual, soooooo good and ate way too much.

September 28th Sunday

Inner Harbor East, Baltimore, MD [Mid 60's – Low 80's, Clear, Light & Variable Winds]

Same weather pattern, typical September weather on the coast. We did the tourist thing with John, all within walking distance from the marina, located around the harbor. Things of interest were the 'Seven foot Knoll Lighthouse' (relocated to Inner Harbor from the mouth of Patapso River showing the way into Baltimore), USCGC Taney a survivor of Pearl Harbor sneak attack, US Submarine Tarak the last American naval vessel to sink a warship in WWII, we walked by but not into the old 'Lightship Chesapeake,' that used to anchor off the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, did not take a 'Duck' (old military amphibious vehicle used in WWII ...does harbor & city tours) since it was at least a one hour wait. We opted for the Public Works museum (Betty had wanted to see since we first arrived). Public Works is really inspiring?? This museum was memorable, with it's chamber pot, wooden water pipe, and wood waste water trough!!!! Oh well, we can say we have been there, and paid to see it too!!! We opted out on the trolley museum, and a good thing too, we later learned that it burned this morning, disappointed as we were, at least we did not waste all that energy walking to it for nothing.

After all that culture, cocktail hour was a blessing, and relaxing on the boat deck watching the world go by was again wonderful.

September 29th Monday

Inner Harbor East, Baltimore, MD [Mid 50's – up 60's, Clear, Lt. Wind]

John returns to Texas while Betty and Jim start making ready for the trip to Florida. Cleaning and fixing small things, as well as shopping for non-perishables so our final shopping day will be quick and easy.

We found the icemaker not working, so as usual we make a 5-minute job hard. It had no designated breaker so we have to pull the unit, the frame is all siliconed, so it is a job. We found no juice getting to the unit, so it is phone time to Neptunus, after 3 calls, they remember that another GFCI is in the bridge cabinet, and there it is, a 3 ½ hour job that would have taken all of 30 seconds to remedy...mumble, mumble!!!! Blood pressure gets back in order, then we remember we had to cut the wires to the wiper on the fly bridge in order to take off the enclosure in preparation for Hurricane Isabel. We made a run to West Marine for a 4-pole plug, and made the splice, a note made to tell Neptunus this needs to be on the boat to start with. Where did this day go, time really passes when your having fun!!!

September 30th Tuesday

Inner Harbor East, Baltimore, MD [Mid 60's – Low 80's, Clear, Light & Variable Winds]

Same weather, a touch of fall in the air, but clear again. Clean, Clean, and more cleaning in preparation for the Florida trip. While cleaning out all the engine room strainers and through hulls, found the air conditioner strainer half full of little barnacles. This was really bad stuff, it took Betty's small hand to get them out of the bowl, hard on the fingernails, making wife very happy. Then we find that the generator oil filters in our spare parts kit did not fit this filter, same diameter, but too long, so will have to order and finish the job when we return. So much for being prepared. After all the washing we discover a wet carpet in the master closet, the clothes washer drain appears to be the cause, it looks like an all day job just to pull the unit, an over/under type, then we also discover the shore water connection leaking, but we could fix that.

We are almost ready anyway. Home tomorrow exited about the trip south.

CHAPTER TWO – BALTIMORE TO FLORIDA KEYS

**Inner Harbor (East) Marina, Baltimore
Chesapeake Bay
Norfolk, VA
Coinjock, NC
Morehead City, NC
Charleston, SC
Cape Canaveral, FL
Miami, FL
Marathon, FL**

October 15th Wednesday

Docked Baltimore, MD [Low 70's, Clear, Light & Variable Winds]

The long anticipated day arrives. Jim and Betty arrive at BWI at 2:15 then meet Dick at 2:30 everyone exited and ready for the trip. Jim, ever optimistic wears shorts, Betty wearing a sweater, Dick pants and long sleeves it was 50 in Tennessee. Jim wins, it is 70 degrees and the sun is shining. We got lucky, we missed yesterdays 2" rain and 60 mph winds.

All the packages Jim had sent to the marina were in, so with 2 carts we were able to take luggage and packages all in one trip. The boat looked fantastic, Jay and his crew had waxed her and cleaned the teak decks, she was beautiful. Captain Jim is thankful MIMI was still tied up for Isabel, she rode out the 60 mph winds no problem.

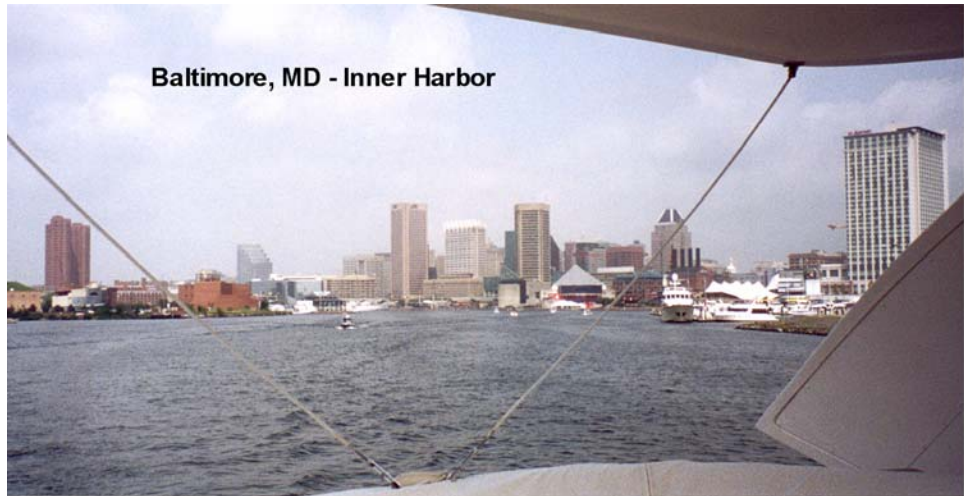
After putting stuff away and while Jim finished changing oil and filers in the genset, Betty and Ralph walk over to 'Whole Foods' to finish shopping for the perishables. Going hungry probably not too smart, so we had to restrain ourselves to hold it down to more than we should have been carrying. Betty gets to stuff the refrigerator, and I mean stuff, had to watch opening the door, something would fall out. With all preparations done, we had a delayed cocktail hour and toasted to our trip. We decided we had to have steamed crab one more time before leaving, so it is off to MO's, a dozen crab later we were stuffed, jumbo crabs expensive, but worth it. Betty poops out at the 8 PM mark, so she was elected to walk back over to the marina to protect our beer and booze delivery that was reluctantly left at the office for us. Ralph and Ralph of course finished off the crab and expected to carry the booze to the boat, but Betty gets a 'trooper' award as it was already on the MIMI aft deck. (She later confessed that a dockhand helped her) The long day was over early... food, drink, and relaxing took its toll, Ralph lays back on sofa, Betty goes to bed to read (makes page 1), Jim last to go, all this by 9:30PM. It is amazing what a boat does for the human body.

October 16th Thursday

Docked Inner Harbor East Marina, Baltimore, MD [Mid 70's, Clear, Wind SW-W 10-15]

We cast off at 0730, a beautiful morning, others were leaving Inner Harbor marinas also, and we saw several trawlers and sailboats, all heading south. By 9 AM wind is at least 15, so much for the 1' chop predicted, we are in 2-3' and could even build more. We passed a 95' yacht that was taking water over the bow up to the fly bridge, makes you really appreciate the Neptunus design, we only took a few wind blown sprays off the starboard side. It was unbelievable the number of boats on the radar screen heading south, had to be more than 50. We passed a big group of sailboats after Annapolis, and the wind was a little stout for some and they were trying to motor, not making much headway. Those sailing doing much better but wet ride for all.

We decided later that most of these sailboats had to leave Annapolis because of the big boat show starting this weekend, and with the 60 mph wind could not leave yesterday, so today was the big have to day.



We had a nice trip down to Norfolk, wind stayed in the 20 range all day, but our ride was ok, a little rough but the boat rides fine, no

problem. We made Norfolk harbor at 3 PM, 6 to 10 boats were getting there about the same time, we figured the migration is on, but not as severe as we imagined earlier.



Pulling into 'Waterside Marina' at 4 PM, we sprayed the boat to get the salt off, as she was covered top to bottom, mostly from the wind spray. Norfolk is a huge Navy port; most of the ships were deployed for the Iraq war effort, but still plenty of ships all along the waterfront. As we came in a tanker was being escorted out; we were told by the coast guard escort to slow to a crawl and stay clear, which we did of course.

After completing our chores and getting MIMI in shape we went to Joe's Crab Shack to try the BBQ Dungeness crap, Steve Jones had raved about to Jim. He was so right, it was delicious. Betty had opted for a last Chesapeake crab cake, but did take a taste of the Dungeness. We were tied to a bulkhead adjoining the mall that 'Joes's' was in; must be a dozen eating places in this mall, what a place. The ferry landing was just behind our boat, it carries a lot of foot traffic across to Delaware side and Condos in south Norfolk as well. The 95 footer we had passed 'Bella Donna' pulled in behind us; they are home based in West Palm Beach, Florida, had a captain, his

wife, and one deck hand, on their way home. We were all bushed so off to bed again early exited about the beginning of the ICW trip tomorrow.

October 17th Friday

Docked Waterside Marina, Norfolk, VA [Low 70's, Clear, Wind W 12-15]

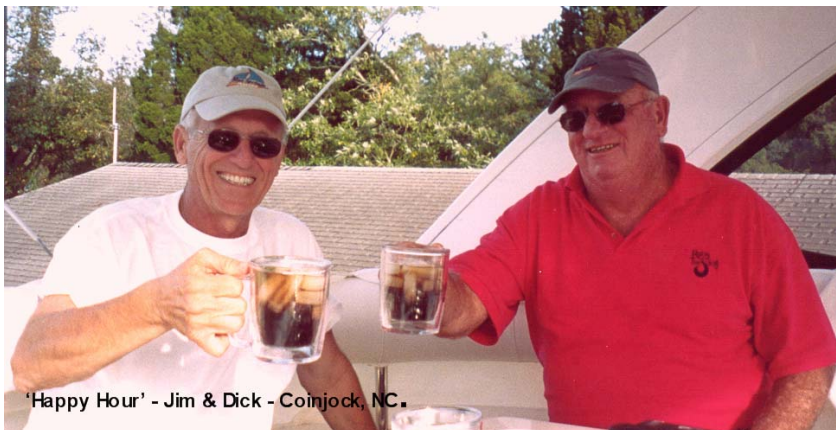
Ralph and Ralph up at 6AM, Capt Ralph working on a new hand held GPS, Ralph Dick catching up the log and cooking a brisket and learning to make coffee as instructed by Capt Ralph.



It is a glorious day, It is shorts day, a true sign we are heading south. From Norfolk we have 6 draw or swing bridges then a lock at mile 12, so we know it will be slow going. It is a steady stream of boats, we were with a group of 2 sailboats and 4 other motor yachts 35' to 95'. Not much waiting at bridges, but at the lock had a good wait while a group went through ahead of us, and then a tow boat and barge with 3 boats coming back through, this allowed other boats to catch up. We ended up with 4 sailboats and 7 other motor yachts to go through together.

As Murphy does it, the sailboats all left the lock first, then we all had to pass them in the narrow channel, lots of frowns, and words when we rocked them, especially the ones that did not have enough sense to slow down to let us pass, if they are going 6 knots, we have to go 10, making big wake. Then mile 20 we have another swing bridge that opens every 30 minutes on the hour and half hour, just missed it so again we get caught up with and we catch up to several boats. At the lock we had been joined by another Neptunus 56 'Rubiyacht' with a paid captain and 1 deck hand, so we had just let them lead the way since the captain has made several trips delivering boats and knew the ropes. A man with an 'attitude' operates this bridge, so we were glad to be there when he opened, because he delighted in making you wait.

'Rubiyacht' cruised at 25 knots, but was real good about slowing for sailboats and trawlers. Some of the trawlers were a bitch to get around, if they kept their speed up to 10-11 then we had no alternative but to really wake them.



We arrived at Coinjock Marina, at Coinjock, NC around 4 PM, washed the boat off lightly, fueled up, and then went into the famous Coinjock restaurant that specialized in a 32 oz prime rib. Betty opted to munch on the boat, so Ralph and Ralph split one of the prime ribs, and will have to say I have had a whole lot better. Not sure what all the raving

was about, obviously those folks have never been to Omaha, or the Midwest for a real prime rib. Dick crashes at 8:30, while J & B watch a movie.

October 18th Saturday

Docked Coinjock, NC [Mid 50's, Overcast, Wind N 20]

While getting ready to go at 0730 a group of bass boats came by, we all hoped they fish some where off the ICW, we could just imagine having to slow to a crawl for 25 fishing boats. As it turns out they did, we did not see many of them again. We get away at 0730 on the dot, a little mist with the wind and cold, so it was really cool with the wind chill. Lots of boats on the move so plenty of passing in the canal. We cross a sound, then into another canal to the Punga River, then another canal to the Neuse River off the Pamlico Sound, another canal to Morehead City, NC. Our marina not as good as the picture in the add, but ok, we are tied up to the fuel dock on the outside with wind blowing us against the dock, not enough fetch to make waves, so no problem. We have a 3 ft tide here so we are a little worried about our fenders riding down and up since we are pressed against the permanent dock. It worked out ok, we tied right, so no problem, and the wind did lay after dark too.

Captain Jim started in immediately on trying to locate and fix the water leak behind the built in washer/dryer unit, it obviously was put in and then the rest of the boat built around it, not a good thing for repairs. While struggling to reach behind the unit to shut off the water lines, his head was resting on a panel tying the dryer to washer. Ralph said this unit is like the one we have at home, that panel comes off and you can reach through to things behind it. Sure enough, 2 screws and its an opening big enough to reach through easily. Thank you Whirlpool, finally a job that would have been one for a shipyard turns into a 5-minute job, and oh yes, that solved the problem, the hose was not tight on the pipe. We fixed a pork loin stuffed with apple/chicken sausage, as usual the meal was wonderful. Watched 'Tombstone,' a real shoot em up movie with Clint Eastwood.

October 19th Sunday

Docked Morehead City Yacht Basin [Mid 70's, Clear, Light Wind]

We leave at 0730 on a beautiful clear calm morning decide to go offshore and around Cape Fear to Charleston since seas 1' to 2' swells over 10 seconds apart. It was just a glorious day, we cruised at 25 knots, very little splash, except for that occasional 4' rogue wave. Made Charleston at 4:30PM, just behind 'Rubiyacht', we had just caught them as we got to the entrance to Charleston. We docked at Ashley Marina, a very nice facility and efficient dockhands. They can fuel you up at the transit dock so we did not have to move once we docked. Washed off the boat, filled-up with 569 gallons of fuel then cooked chicken on the spit while having cocktails on the upper deck and people watching. The transit docks fill up by dark. This was a very nice day offshore for the first serious ocean run.

October 20th Monday

Docked Ashley Marina, Charleston, SC [Low 80's, Clear, Lt &Var Wind]

Going to stay in Charleston today for tourist type things and give Betty her shopping fix. Late start 11AM, ate at Hyman's Seafood restaurant at 2:30, very good but too filling, Betty goes shopping, Ralph and Ralph locate a shoe store then have the marina come get us, we are too stuffed to walk around much. Betty gets back about 4:45, no one hungry so it was a very light munchies type supper, then early to bed.

October 21st Tuesday

Docked Ashley Marina, Charleston, SC [Low 80's, Clear, Wind W 10-15]

Predictions are for less than 3' waves on ocean. We were away at 0700, a beautiful morning sunrise outlined some clouds way out in the Atlantic, a very bright red... gorgeous. Set our course for St Simon, GA, with an ETA of 1:05 PM, another nice ride with less than 2' swell hardly noticeable. We were docked at 2 PM, very nice marina and dock hands really good, easy landing even with heavy tidal current. The tide ranges more than 8' here.

We fueled up then got 'Missie' a girl from the office to run us to the village by the lighthouse. Since 'out-of-season,' the place kind of dead, some of the stores and bars closed, others had very few customers. We had a beer at Brogans then walked by the lighthouse and the monument to the Right Whales. This area is the breeding grounds for Right Whales, so we were hoping to see one, but since only 300 left due to being hit by ships and over fishing, probably no chance of that. While Betty shopped, Ralph and Ralph parked at the 'Sandpiper,' we were the only 2 customers, and drank their last 2 Fosters beer.



When Betty joined us we called 'Missie' for a ride back to the marina. We found Brogans Raw Bar at the marina so had some raw oysters and some baked with cheese, pretty good stuff. We then cooked a couple of Strip Steaks with Acorn squash for a late supper around 8:30, being very careful not of over-eat! Besides tomorrow night is 'left overs' night.

October 22nd Wednesday

Docked Golden Isle Marina, St. Simons, GA [Mid 80's, Partly cloudy, Wind W 15+]

We were preparing to leave when it was decided to stay here another day. Betty says 'it's not a race' and Capt. Ralph 'agrees.' J & B rented an auto to go sight seeing and visit the house featured in Coastal Living Magazine. It was built on a small \$3.5 million lot, right on the beach with almost a 120-degree view of the Atlantic Ocean. Also visited Sea Island, looked at a lot of high dollar homes and went by the 'Cloisters' a famous old hotel that is going to be torn down and replaced.

October 23rd Thursday

Docked Golden Isle Marina, St. Simons, GA [M80's, Clear, Lt West Wind]

After a lot of discussion whether to go ICW or offshore, the Captain decides to go offshore to Cape Canaveral, FL bypassing Amelia Island, Jacksonville Beach, St. Augustine, and Daytona Beach mainly because of all the 'no wake' and Manatee zones, and depth of ICW marginal a lot of spots for our 5 ft draft. We have a nice day, seas less than 3 ft, swells 8 seconds apart, and sunny all day. We saw quite a few boats out fishing and some traveling, cruising at 25 knots, we passed several Mega Yachts, bound for Ft. Lauderdale boat show. We arrive at 4 PM, just as wind gets up to around 15..... 'Docking winds' of course. Fueled up with 506 gallons then moved over to dock

T-head, fixed Pork chops on grill then early to bed. Offshore cruising is like 8 hours of exercise, all your muscles working all the time.

October 24th Friday

Docked Cape Marina, Cape Canaveral, FL [Mid 80's, Clear, West 10-15]

After a little more discussion, we are away at 0700 offshore to Miami Beach. Another great day at sea, again less than 3 ft seas, with winds increasing later on. We arrive Miami Beach at 3 PM, after fueling at the fuel dock, we move to our slip in the middle of a bunch of sail boaters from Punta Gorda, over on the west coast of Florida in Charlotte Bay. There were 14 boats; all of them (boaters) were 60 to 70 plus years old out for a cruise, having fun. After washing off salt from the boat and a late cocktail hour, we showered and headed for 'Monty's' for stone crab.

'Monty's' is located in the marina complex so it is just a short walk thank goodness, the wind is blowing at least 15, gusting to 20 plus. We found out the main dining room was closed for a private party, so we went to Monty's Deck Bar on the ground floor hoping for some of those good Stone Crab. We ordered our cocktails and as we were about to order from the menu, our waiter told us that outside they had a bar set up during happy hour 4 to 8 and sell Stone Crab 2 for \$5 and shrimp and raw oysters for \$1 each. We had 18 Stone Crab and 18 shrimp and a dozen raw oysters, and finished off with a pitcher of beer. What a feast!!! After pigging out, we could not stick around to listen to the band and headed back to the boat to people watch. This is some place, lot of activity everywhere.

October 25th Saturday

Docked Miami Beach Marina, Miami Beach, FL [Upper 80's, Clear, Wind East 15-20, G25]

Due to wind out of East and seas 7 ft, we stay put for another day. We walked the docks to look at the Mega Yachts upwards to 200'. Larry Ellison's of Oracle (also Americas Cup Boat sponsor) 200' yacht was tied up to the fuel dock, it had a basketball court on the second deck aft, and on the first deck aft was a glassed in weight and exercise room that we could see, what a boat. Dick drooled all over a 68' Swan sailboat for sale, only \$1.7 mil. Big boats kept coming and a 100' plus sailboat too. Wind was really blowing, a good day to lay over.

Met a young man that was from Kemah, Texas, he had raced with Dick's son Ron on the sailboat 'We Bad' the champ on Galveston Bay for 3 years running. He was a skipper on one of the offshore fishing boats as well as working for a broker. His boat had a charter this morning and they took off about 8 am, by 9:30 they were back letting off, what we figured were customers some corporation was taking out; they were pretty green. They headed out again, but came back in around noon, everyone green except the boat crew. Way too rough to be out there fishing.

We just had a good time people watching all day long. Critiquing how people tied up their boats, especially the sailboats around us that were bouncing all over the place with no spring lines.... Unbelievable... a solution that is oh so necessary (and easy) especially in a rough marina. We once again went up to Monty's for more Stone Crab, but since no special on Saturday we paid the price this time roughly \$12 each, but worth it.

Before retiring A warning from Betty "if winds and seas are still up tomorrow..... do not leave for Marathon unless you plan on going without me!!!"

October 26th Sunday

Docked Miami Beach Marina, Miami Beach, FL [Upper 80's, Clear, Wind East 10]

The seas were down to 3 ft. and we head out at 8 AM (no longer daylight savings time), and it was already warm. Nice easy run to Marathon only 90 miles down Hawk Channel inside the reef from Florida Straights, but outside (east of) the Keys.



Faro Blanco (Spanish for White Tower or Light House) Bayside marina is pretty laid back place, the slip is great, backed up against the dock running along the land, so you can drive, walk right up to the back of the boat. Most of the slips have shades 'Tiki Huts' made from palm leaves, except ours, and you can no longer build them, so it will be umbrella over a table for us, which is ok. The north view from our slip is of the marina office (photo above), which is located at the base of an operating lighthouse, and Florida Bay.

We met several of the neighbors, then fixed a roast on the spit, and watched the sun set while eating on the upper deck. We are truly in a paradise. After sun set we watched the movie 'Italian Job', our first movie in a week.