

LOG of the *MIMI*



CHAPTER 9 – WATTS BAR LAKE, TN

Blue Springs Marina, Ten-Mile, Tennessee – August, 2004

Watts Bar Lake

(M547.5) Wednesday, August 4, 2004 – Temple, TX & Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN

Temple: L80's-U90's Partly Cloudy, Wind SE10 kts

Blue Springs: U60's-L80's, Partly Cloudy, Wind S5-10 kts

We're up at 4:15am for the 6:15 1-stop flight, our first out of the new Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport 'GRK.' The new airport is a 'joint-use' (civilian and military) airport located at Gray Army Airbase on Fort Hood (about 20 miles from home). The drive is about 10-15 minutes further than the old Killeen Airport 'ILE' but with 'C5A' Military cargo plane length runways, it can handle 'RJ' regional jet commercial passenger planes... a must since commuter airlines are phasing out the smaller propjets... and the reason for a new airport, because of a short runway at the old airport and no way to extend it. Perhaps 'RJ' service will push back the departure time and Betty won't have to get up 15 minutes earlier... we'll see. The new airport is well done with modern design and jet ways that even serve the small propjets.

Ralph picks us up at Knoxville Airport 'TSY' at 12:30pm with stops for groceries and Fosters on the way. It's hard to explain beer taste. From the 50's to the 70's Lone Star was the only beer. Back in those days you could buy direct (3-case minimum) from Curtis Williams (Wendell's dad) Lone Star Distributing Company at \$3.00 a case! Later, Jack Hilliard, Jr. converted many, old Jaycees to Budweiser and Michelob; the switch made easier by Curtis and Wendell selling Lone Star. For twenty-some years it was 'Bud' and along comes Fosters... 'a full-bodied' beer! The switch, made difficult because Hilliard isn't the distributor, was made over a few years with a lot of getting used to the \$12-\$14 per case prices... justified because life's too short to drink cheap (or lite) beer!

After 2-cart loads of 'stuff' are hauled to 'MIMI' and packed away, Jay Lustkus (Sea Clean) wax job is inspected and as usual... perfection. As Jay said... "Too bad she'll have been hit by the spiders before you see her"... It's the disadvantage of covered slips... spiders and their droppings. On the other hand, it would be nice in the shade on a hot day... if we had one! It's nice to be home.

J&B turn-in early... it's been a long, tiresome day! The Jones's and Steidle's' retire to 'Loose Wire;' where Janet continues her work copying 'MIMI' camcorder tapes to make a DVD's. Dick & Larry watch and Larry resisted having a few Tequila's with Dick. Janet thinks some of the trip from Mobil was recorded over... not so; only took stills on this portion of the trip.

Thursday, August 5, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN

U60's-L80's, Wind N 5-10kts, Rain ending by Noon

9:00am change out of 'MIMI's' props is scheduled this morning and at 8:30am Larry confirms it, in spite of the rain shower... they're used to working in the rain here. Ralph is sleeping in... must have been the Tequila, so we undock and move to the lift well; it's tight but no problem. Lift capacity is marginal for the 'MIMI' but after repositioning the lift straps a couple times, she's up high enough... props about a foot out of the water.

Three man crew, headed by Shawn, was unable to get the work barge under, so they improvised with a Jet Ski platform that did the job. It was slow-going, in a heavy down-pour and 3 guys balancing tools and props on the little platform, not to mention all the 'supervision' they received from two Ralph's under umbrellas; Dick had finally shown but not looking well from last night. The 36" diameter, 4-blade props looked fine, no dings or any visible damage... probably a blade or two slightly out of alignment. We have 'MIMI' back in the water by noon and running smooth again.



Blue Springs Crew Changing Port Prop

Jeanne treats the girls, Betty, Janet, Cindy, Barb (Jim McKay's sister) and Jean Steidle (Larry's mother) to a trip to 'White Stone'... a bed & breakfast resort, located on a large acreage fronting the Tennessee River, not far from Blue Springs. They have a few rooms, tennis courts, gazebos, and even a chapel where they perform marriages. A late and fabulous lunch is a treat from Jeanne; it's a birthday gift for each... nice touch Jeanne. The late lunch was fabulous but by late evening they were still too full to join the guys for a grilled Salmon dinner. During ADD's, lies turned to Maryland steamed Crab and how much the delicacy is being missed this summer... no lie! Soon a 'plan' develops for a drive to Maryland tomorrow (it's only 9 hours one way), have the props fixed at a good prop shop in Rock Harbor, MD and gorge on steamed Crab... perhaps at 'The Crab Deck' at Kent Island Narrows, our favorite crab place. Talk drifts to other lies with a promise for tomorrow. "There's a lot of truth in a full bottle of whiskey and a lot of lies in an empty!" Jimmy Buffett.

Friday, August 6, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN **U60's-L80's, Clear, Wind Light & Variable**

A cold front passed through yesterday evening, clearing out the rain and humidity. August 6, 2004 and the temperature in New York City this morning is 53 degrees... must be 'global warming!' The idea of driving to the Chesapeake is not as appealing this morning; notwithstanding the 9-hour drive... it's colder there!

Ralph drives to Cleveland to check in at the office and pick-up some things, while 'mechanic' Jim, changes the transmissions oil. The book calls for cleaning the 'suction strainers,' but there's no way! The transmission mountings (angle iron) are flush against the bolt head (that holds the strainer in), making it impossible to loosen and remove the bolt. An email photo will soon be on its way to Neptunus for a solution!

The replacement VHF antenna arrives and is installed. A new 80' Somerset Houseboat, owned by Ed Jessup, a Case Knives executive, arrives and docks in the slip next to 'MIMI.' The delivery crew does a real job cleaning with a power washer... good thing 'MIMI' needed washing cause they sprayed all over her. Two hours of power washing will drive you crazy; like an aching tooth, it just won't stop hurting. It's as good a time as any to wash 'MIMI.' Half through washing and Ralph arrives with news that Larry located a reputable prop shop 'Professional Prop Service,' about an hour from here in Soddy Daisy, TN and there's just enough time to drive over before they close. Betty takes over and finishes the wash job... good planning!

We return about 6:30pm... the dock is in full swing with Rum & Coke's & Smokes (and other lesser stuff). Too many to fix for dinner for so some head for the 'Crows Nest' and the McKay's buy dinner for the

Howe's, Jones's and Steidle's... All right! Good Food and good music. After the McKay's leave... they boat over to their home in the next cove... Ross & Holly join us for ADD's. Ross is the local Budweiser Distributor so we have our Fosters in glasses... it's an old habit from bars back in Texas; beer distributor's stop by and buy a round for all those drinking their brand.

It's hard to believe how cold it is... feels like a fall day... like there should be a football game tomorrow! Back on the 'MIMI' ... with air conditioning, the boat is warmer than outside... but it's too late for 'Water World.' Oh, well... another time! Betty did a good job boat washing (the half Jim hadn't done when he left to deliver the props), but her 'put away' was lacking!

Poker Run – Skinny Dip Cove

Saturday, August 7, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN
61-80 Clear, Wind Light & Variable

The light wind is predominately out of the north and cold... hard to believe it's August! A 'Poker Run' is scheduled for today. Boaters pay a \$20 entry fee and boat from cove to cove where 'dealer's' are anchored and ready to 'deal' a card for five-stud poker hands; the fifth card will be drawn back at the Horizon Yacht Club, clubhouse. Ralph is one of the dealer's so we head out to 'Skinny Dip' cove on the 'DJ Explorer' just before noon.



'Jester' Mark Oakley

There are 50 entries and at \$20 each a thousand dollars is raised to benefit the local Fire Department and deaf students. Many of the entrants are paired-up so there aren't that many boats, leaving plenty of the afternoon for reading and a swim or two. Jim is reading 'A Pirate Looks at 50' by Jimmy Buffett, on loan from Larry, it's easy reading... what else?

It's still chilly, except in the sun (and out of the wind). As the day wore on it gradually warmed and when the wind finally shifted to the south it was really nice. There was only one accident ... Mark Oakley 'Lagniappe;' having over-imbibed last night, resumed this morning, where he left

off last night and set sail (motoring) in questionable condition. He arrived at the 'DJ' with sound blaring and pennants flying, wearing what appeared to be a court jester's hat. Fearing the worst, Ralph drew Mark's card for him, rather than take a chance on his drunken docking skills. He departed 'Skinny Dip' in search of the next dealer, with his 'Beneteau' sailboat, at top speed... in reverse! Not good!

At 6:00pm everyone gathered at the clubhouse to draw the last card of their poker hand to determine the winner, followed by BBQ and beer for everyone. Dave & Connie Kirk 'Caddy Shack' sponsored the food and Larry & Janet 'Loose Wire' the beer and the \$100 Poker Run prize (Blue Springs gift certificate). Mark missed the party... having passed-out on the return to the marina, he rammed the end of the dock and damaged another boat; had he passed just 20' more to his port he would have ran right into 'MIMI's' stern... it would have been an ugly picture!

The party breaks up early; Betty is intent on seeing the Agassi / Roddick tennis match. Agassi wins in a terrific tennis match with 3 'tie-breaker' sets. It wasn't your usual 'watching grass grow' tennis! Water World was mentioned, but by 10:00pm no one was up to it.

Sunday, August 8, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN
L60's-M80's Clear, Wind Light & Variable

Wow! It's still cold... someone said 'I hate winter!' The light wind shifted back to the north during the night ... hard to figure. Larry and Janet are going out of town tomorrow so Jim downloads all the pictures from yesterday's Poker Run, to Larry's computer so they can be posted on the Horizon Yacht Club website.

Two Ralph's have breakfast at the 'Crows Nest' before tackling this mornings 'gottado' project... building onion racks in Dick's storage shed... As has been previously chronicled in the log, Ralph loves Vidalia onions because not only are they sweet and delicious, they are the only kind that don't give him gaaaassss! Every summer he stocks up... and they last until February. To keep that long, they must be stored properly (without touching) on chicken wire racks. Ralph has a storage shed here at the marina where the lake inventory of Vidalia's is stored but some are going bad because hanging in net bags they touch and don't get enough air circulation.

To save the winter inventory, racks must be constructed... a real experience... obviously Dick is no framer...! A few pieces of wood, chicken wire, a hand full of nails, a hammer, dull cross-cut hand saw and stapler (all furnished by Larry) was enough (barely) for the 2 'craftsmen.' Conspicuously missing from the 'tool kit' was a tape measure, which resulted in some interesting pieces and unique design.



The 2 ½ hour project would have taken Omega Builders framer, George Chipman about 20 minutes... and have been structurally sound; the racks are fully expected to collapse before the onions are all gone. Jeanne & Betty arrive to critique the job... everyone agreed there must be something about onions and the Howe family... Jim's dad raised Aggie Onions (1015Y)... he had a planter and drying racks and one year, with friend Don Adams, harvested nearly 20,000.

'Safety Harbor' - Anchorage

Needing phone and email service, the MIMI is undocked for a short cruise to Xingular phone reception. Naturally the inbox is full of Betty's trash... Victoria's Secret and tennis stuff and Jim gives up after about 40 minutes. 'Safety Harbor' is nearby and the chosen anchorage for tonight. 'DJ Explorer' is already anchored and 'MIMI' is quickly rafted-up. 'Safety Harbor' is a perfect winter (it still feels like winter) cove with wind protection from all directions. There are 7 other boats anchored for the afternoon.

The afternoon swim is refreshing and enhanced with Betty's Pena' Colada's, made with fresh Pineapple; they were terrific! Ron Jones, Dick & Jeanne's son, and wife Teresa and son Kevin stop by for a visit and a swim. The girls watched tennis and Andre Agassi beating Layton Hewitt from Australia... and the boys celebrate by toasting Fosters! You know... 'Australian for Beer.'

By 4:30pm the other boats in the cove depart and its time to get ready for dinner; Jim McKay is coming at 5:00pm to taxi us to his house. They've also invited Janet & Larry and Jim's sister Barb and husband Bill Phillips. Jim & Cindy have a beautiful log home, located right on the lake with a nice dock. The house is nestled in the trees with a beautiful lawn extending about 200' feet down to waters edge ... a beautiful setting that includes a horseshoes court to one side.

A 'hot' match of horseshoes broke out during cocktails and everyone played except Cindy who's busy in the kitchen. Having never played before, the rules of the game are quickly explained to J&B. Must have

been beginners luck because the team of Bill (who is experienced) and Jim H. (who is not) handily beat Jim M. and Larry by a score of 21–6. In the girls match's, Jeanne was the star with 5 'ringers'... when she said "oh! oh!" it meant the pitch was way short... but would roll to the pin anyway! Everyone agreed we missed Cindy, but her cooking was terrific... great meal and a great evening. Water taxi back... we were probably asleep before McKay made it back to the dock.

Monday, August 9, 2004 – Anchored, Safety Cove, Watts Bar Lake, TN

L60's-L80's Overcast, Wind Light & Variable – Light Fog Early followed by Light Rain



Betty pitches a 'ringer'

Brunch with Betty and itinerary and touring 'discussion' was interrupted by light rain. Jim makes satellite phone contact with the office, also called Robert Francis (canvass maker) to expedite the Dinghy cover, and 'Cummins Cumberland' to schedule valve lash adjustment on the Onan Genset. After the short rain, it slowly cleared and turned into a beautiful day... that proceeded to evaporate!

Two turtles hung around the boat all afternoon and would swim on the surface to within a few feet of us. Later, during cocktail hour, we threw chips... they had been begging all along! Ralph brought movies and because we started so early we watched a double feature; Indiana Jones and the 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' (Harrison Ford and Karen Allen) followed by 'Mad Max – Beyond the Thunderdome' (Mel Gibson and Tina Turner) which made number one on the all-time worst movie list... it was baaaaad!

Tuesday, August 10, 2004 – Anchored, Safety Cove, Watts Bar Lake, TN

L70's-M80's Partly Cloudy, Wind Light & Variable – Light Fog Early

The Blue Heron are up early making their screeching calls. It is amazing how relatively little wildlife we see here. There must be so much forest that wildlife doesn't have to frequent populated areas. Safety Cove is undeveloped though, so you'd think there would be more.

Two tropical storms (predicted to become hurricanes) are building, one in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico, and the other in the Caribbean, SW of Puerto Rico. The projected paths predict landfall of Gulf storm 'Bonnie' near Panama City, FL., and 'Charlie' could hit the Keys but probably much further north ... perhaps the lower Florida panhandle. Path forecasting is fairly inaccurate at this stage, however we're watching 'Charlie' because of our Marathon 'home' ... of special 'concern' is the shell covered umbrella stand left behind. Cathy Niebur emailed a few days ago that Butch had move the umbrella and chairs to the new slip patio. Thanks Butch... we're curious how you managed it... moving a base weighing 120 pounds and covered with sharp seashells.

Betty is up around 10:00am just as Dick & Jeanne prepare to depart for Blue Springs and home for a couple of days. They are leaving one of their cars so J&B can do some touring; Betty wants to go to Gatlinburg. Ralph says it's just a tourist trap with every other store a 'Ripley's Believe It Or Not' or T-Shirt shop. J&B decide to spend the day in 'Safety Cove,' returning in time to fuel & pump-out and in the slip by 5pm.

Our dock neighbor, Ed Jessup with the 80' houseboat, has a 60' Hatteras 'Case Closed' in Key Largo and is keeping an eye on hurricane 'Charlie.' After making 10 annual trips from Florida to Tennessee, Ed figures the houseboat ownership cost vs. the annual trip cost in the Hatteras to be about equal.

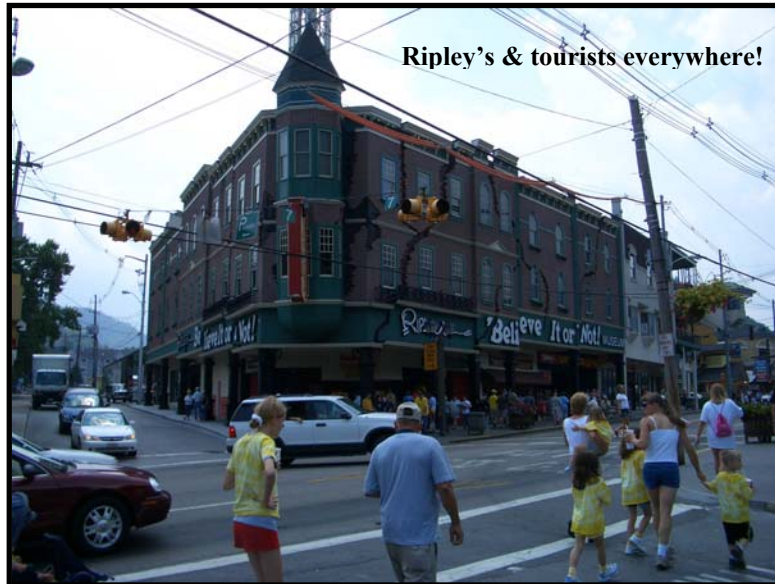
Gatlinburg, TN - August 11, 2004

Wednesday, August 11, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN

L70's-L80's, Cloudy, Wind SE10, Rain Chance 50%

We drive to Gatlinburg... via the mountain scenic route and lunch in Wear Valley, near Pidgin Forge. 'Dolly Wood' got a pass; it's an amusement park similar to 'Six Flags' started and owned by Dolly Parton. The long town strip is lined with motels, theaters, eateries and go-cart tracks. The Smoky Mountains drive from Pidgin Forge to Gatlinburg is beautiful with a rock and boulder lined river dividing the 4-lane highway.

Ralph was wrong though... every other shop isn't T-Shirts or Ripley's... but close. We see only one 'Ripley's Believe it or Not' and one 'Guinness Records' but it does seem like every other shop is a candy store... fudge, taffy, every imaginable kind... a lot of western photo shops, where you pose for pictures behind western scenes. Jim works on his tan in the male waiting area (park benches outside) while Betty hits a few shops... wonder of wonders... no purchase... maybe she had something shipped? We escaped having spent just \$8 for a parking space. It was a 'been there and done that' trip that



probably won't be repeated though the beautiful drive through the mountains made the trip worth it... plus it was cool and the rain held off until 4pm. There appeared to be thunderstorms a good distance to the south.

Thursday, August 12, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN
61-78, Cloudy-Light Rain, NW5-10

Cold rain continues... it must have rained all night. With no paper (no delivery's in the rain) Betty has no choice but to read anything at hand (it's her thing during morning coffee) and settles for Gatlinburg brochures where she discovers that had we walked in the opposite direction yesterday, we would have found Ralph wasn't far from right about all the 'Ripley's' shops. 'Ripley's' actually has five facilities; 'Aquarium of the Smokies,' 'Believe it or Not,' Davy Crockett Mini Golf,' 'Haunted Adventure,' and 'Moving Theater.'

Steve with Cummins Cumberland arrives at 5pm to do the 800 hour 'valve lash' adjustment on the Onan Genset. It took about 2 hours and cost a lot (with 2 hours drive time), however Captain Jim knows how to do it the next time. Dick & Jeanne return around 4pm and we dine on the 'DJ Explorer.' Afterwards, Connie & Dave Kirk join us on the 'MIMI' for a while. 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' for entertainment... thankfully 'Junior' saves father Jones with water from the chalice! What a show!

Friday, August 13, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN
U50's-M70's, Partly Cloudy, Wind NW5

Everyone is amazed at the cold weather... even the local's. Hurricane 'Connie' went through Florida and is heading up the east coast today, while 'Charlie' missed the Keys (path was projected yesterday to be between the Dry Tortugas and 7-Mile Bridge (the east end is at Marathon) and is expected to landfall at Tampa Bay; with 10'-12' storm surge it could do a lot of damage.

Robert Francis, the canvas guy, picked-up the dinghy and will make a new cover for it next week. He and Ralph have perfected a design featuring a ratcheting drawstring to tighten the cover (just below the rub rail) and with battens to bow the top and prevent water collecting.

Engine room clean up is this mornings project... a gottado after yesterday's Genset service work; once started, its hard to stop... went ahead and cleaned the bilges too. Big job, took the morning and half the afternoon! We hear that 'Charlie' missed the Keys... Thank you God! Now he's forecast to landfall at Ft. Meyers. The path could result in very heavy rain and combined with storm surge will result in severe flooding. Millions have been evacuated from west Florida... said to be the largest evacuation in history.

Grilled Pork roast on the spit... Oh, so juicy and tender... thank you Bill Jones for the great Electri-Chef grill. For this evening's entertainment, we (Howe's & Jones's) watch 'Monty Walsh,' a great western starring Tom Selleck. It's been too cold to be out after sundown... just unbelievable for mid August.

Saturday, August 14, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN
L60's-M70's, Partly Cloudy, Wind NW5

It's still winter on Watts Bar Lake! Hurricane 'Charlie' made landfall at Punta Gorda, FL inflicting huge damage to the area with 16 killed and many still missing or unaccounted for. 'Charlie' hit the coast and kept on going across Florida and up the east coast...he's not finished.

Jim & Cindy McKay motor over for happy hour in the 1989 42' 'Grand Banks' trawler 'MAILA' ("Messin Around in Lower Alabama") they've just purchased. It's in mint condition with extremely low hours for a 15 year old boat; and she's loaded with gear including a water maker. The galley has never been cooked in. Larry and Janet have returned from a boat dealer meeting and join us too. Janet completed copying 'MIMI' camcorder tapes and delivers a VHS copy with instructions to preview it and provide copy that she will insert before copying to DVD's. Thanks Janet.



Sunday, August 15, 2004 – Docked, Blue Springs, Watts Bar Lake, TN
L60's-M70's, Partly Cloudy, Wind NW5

More bilge work this morning; still seems to be too much water in the aft bilge. Close inspection reveals continuous water dripping from the rudder shafts; probably 15-20 gallons a day. There doesn't appear to be any way to tighten or adjust. The manual stipulates that over-greasing (there's a grease zerk on each) can result in 'blowing-out' the O-Ring seals so with them already leaking, no grease is added. We need additional input from Neptunus.

It's departure day and Ralph drives us to a Knoxville motel for our 6:15am flight tomorrow. It's been a relaxing trip; unfortunately the second half was so cold swimming wasn't considered. Hopefully it will be warmer when we return. Ralph will keep a watchful eye on the shaft leaks and the bilge pump.

Monday, August 16, 2004 – Knoxville, TN and Temple, TX
Knoxville: L60's-M70's, Partly Cloudy, Wind NW5
Temple: M70's-L90's, Partly Cloudy, Wind Light & Variable

Arriving in the new Killeen-Fort Hood Airport early we had a short wait for daughter Rachel and grandson Ruffin to pick us up. Back in the office by 11:00am, the first order of business is a call to Neptunus; by coincidence they have a crew heading to Chattanooga to service a 62 footer on the 29th and they will meet us in Blue Springs. They have replacement O-Rings and we'll have to haul 'MIMI' out again. We hope the lift will do it this time... with topped-off fuel tanks she's about 4,000 pounds heavier. If not, we'll cruise down to Chattanooga where there is a bigger lift.

Photo Gallery – Chapter 9



Props Change-out and Lift maxed-out with props 1 foot above water level



'Supervisor's'



'Piece a Cake'



Linda

Ron, Stacy & Dick Jones
'Take a Card'





Linda



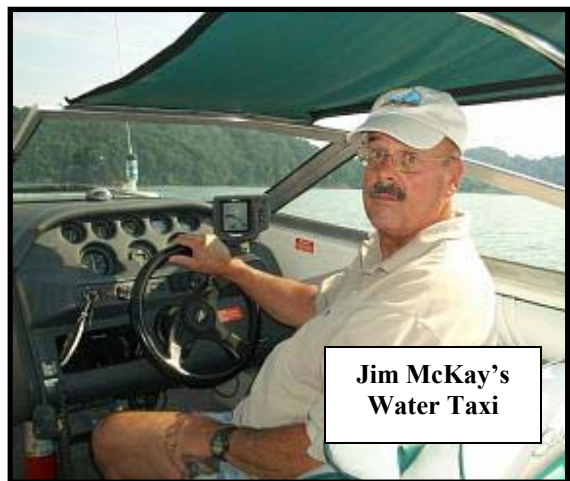
Art



MIMI's First Covered Slip – alongside an 80 ' Somerset



Teresa, Ron & Kevin Jones



Jim McKay's Water Taxi



**Janet's
Great
Form**



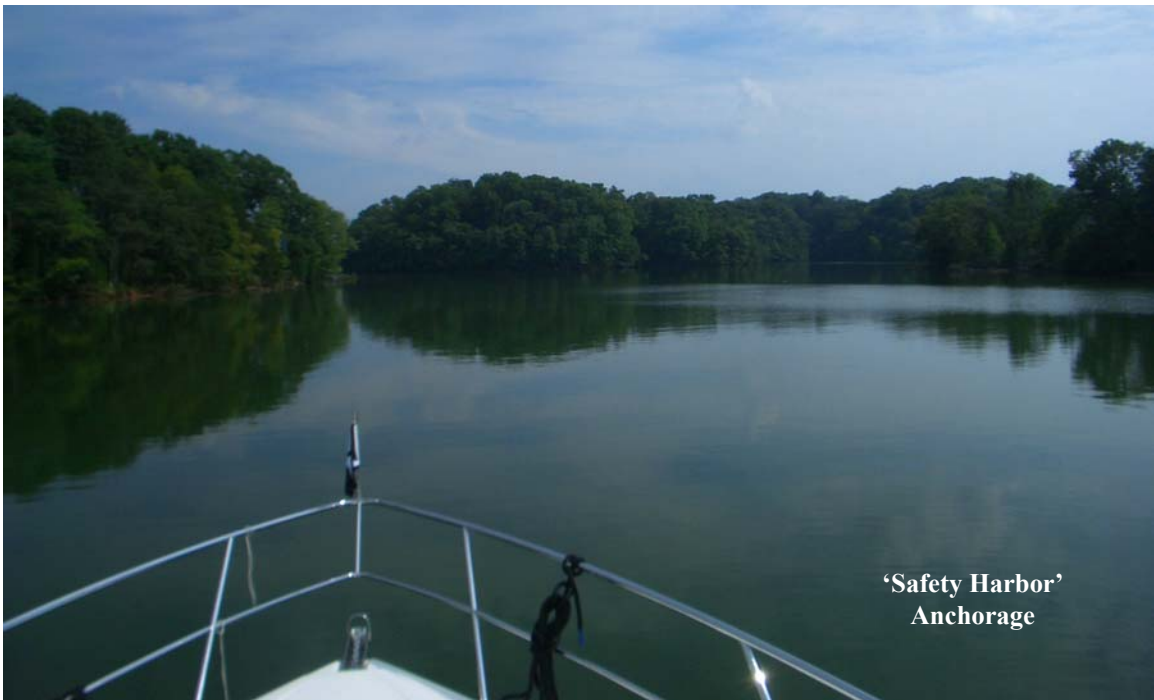
**Barb
Score's**



**Bill &
Jeanne
Win**



**Jeanne
Pitched
a
'Ringer'**



**'Safety Harbor'
Anchorage**