

# *Adventure is Out There!*



By Ted McGee

Photographs by Ted & Dora McGee

Dora and I participated in a small boat cruise in northern Wisconsin, organized by Stuart and Michelle Weist. Stuart is the Cruising Captain for the Catalina 22 National Sailing Association. This was the second time he and Michelle organized this cruise. It was our first time to participate. The article title is borrowed from the cruise t-shirts, "Adventure is Out There". This cruise is an adventure.

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Twelve boats with 32 crew consisting of family and friends participated:

Stuart & Michelle Weist	Preston, MN	Catalina 22	<i>Lake Shark</i>
Ted & Dora McGee	Cumming, GA	Catalina 22	<i>Rhapsody in sea</i>
John & Dawn Herschlip	Lake Metigoshe, ND	Catalina 22	<i>Moon Shine</i>
David & Lynn Irwin	Lawrence, KS	ComPac Eclipse 20	<i>Knot Fast</i>
Steve Price	Minneapolis, MN	Catalina 18	<i>Dream Hog</i>
Erik Siegel, Lou Siegel	San Antonio, TX	Catalina 22	<i>Season Pass</i>
Michael Smith and Simon Roberts	Littleton, CO	Seaward 25	<i>Athena</i>
Dan & Beth Hyslop	Madison, WI	Beneteau 31	<i>Pearl</i>
Eric Anderson and Kim Wepking	Clear Lake, IA	Catalina 22	<i>Whole Lotta Rosie</i>
Ben & Stacy Malmanger	Chetek, WI	Hunter 260	<i>Orion</i>
Stephen & Brenda Hunt	Corea, ME	Catalina 22	<i>Feathertop</i>

In addition to the adults, we also had several young sailors join us. Luke Weist on Lake Shark, George and Angela Hyslop on Pearl, Johnathan, Cody, and Aspen on Orion, Kimberly, Benjamin, Timothy, Daniel, and Nathaniel Hunt on Feathertop. They brought more meaning to the adventure. As soon as the anchor was dropped swimming was the first order of business. All the young sailors on the trip were polite, thoughtful, and always ready to help with the boat. It was a real pleasure to sail with them.

Every boat had a reason for participating and a story. Love of sailing, love of family, and the spirit of adventure are common themes among sailors. Erik Siegel, for example, sailed with his dad, Lou. Lou is a Vietnam vet and retired Delta pilot. Erik learned his love of sailing from his dad. At the other end of the spectrum is Feathertop. If you counted the kids listed above there were seven people on that boat. Adventure played a big part in their decision in addition to love of family. One of the goals among the kids on Feathertop was to swim in each of the Great Lakes. Children on the cruise were developing the same sense of joy of sailing as their parents. Someday they may pass that on to their children. There were married couples, friends, and solo sailors all of which shared a passion for sailing and the adventure waiting out there, somewhere among the Apostle Islands.

The Apostle Islands are a group of 22 islands in Lake Superior. They are located off the Bayfield Peninsula in northern Wisconsin. Most of the islands are uninhabited, Madeline Island being the exception. There are lighthouses on several of the islands and signs of early development. Many of the islands have wilderness camping. The islands are accessed by boat. In addition to tour boats, we saw sailboats, power boats, and kayakers out exploring.

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Our starting point would be one of the smallest cities in Wisconsin, Bayfield. The drive from our home in Cumming, Georgia to Bayfield, Wisconsin is approximately 1200 miles. We broke the 23-hour drive into two 10-hour days and one 3-hour day. We set out around 6:00 AM on Friday, August 9, with our Catalina 22, *Rhapsody in seA*, in tow. I had serviced the bearings and trailer lights beforehand and expected the trip to be uneventful.



On the second day we stopped at Willow Creek Rest Stop just south of Rockford, IL. We met a friendly trucker who came over to chat with us. Richard Jacobson is a retired Navy Chief Petty Officer, and he was interested in our boat. After chatting a few minutes, he headed over to his truck and returned with a heavy-duty truck-style ratchet strap to put over the top of our boat. We had our typical setup consisting of a wide strap at the bow and two on the stern. Richard thought that one over the cabin top would be useful. That way, if something happened to either strap at the bow or stern, we would still be secure in two places. We gratefully accepted his gift and added the strap across the cabin top. We thanked him for his help and generosity, exchanged contact information, and got back on the road.

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We arrived in Bayfield Sunday, August 11. Some of the other cruisers were already there. Learning from their example, if we get to do this cruise again, we will come early as well. Bayfield has one launch ramp, and it can get busy. Parking is available for a tow vehicle and trailer. There is a launch fee of \$15.00 for boats over 20 feet. Parking is limited to three days. Stuart had arranged parking for the week for everyone on the cruise.

The parking lot was full when we got there, but a spot soon opened. Shortly after our arrival Moon Shine arrived, followed by Lake Shark. The launch area has two ramps with deep enough water to launch our wing keel boats. Boaters waited patiently for their turn at the ramp. After launching we headed over to the City of Bayfield public dock to explore the town.

We ate dinner in Bayfield and opted to anchor out for the night. The weather and the night sky were gorgeous. We could easily make out nebula and galaxies, something difficult to do in the light pollution of the Southeastern United States. It reminded me of the sky I used to see growing up in the small mountain town of Mt. Shasta in Northern California. The evening was a cool 58 degrees, perfect for sleeping on the boat.

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The official start of the cruise was Monday, August 12th. We would spend the day getting setup in the marina, doing last minute shopping, exploring, Bayfield, and getting to know some of the other participants. Bayfield offers plenty of shopping and an excellent maritime museum. That evening we gathered for a group meeting and potluck dinner. Stuart and Michelle provided hot dogs and ice cream and the rest of us brought side dishes.

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Tuesday, August 13th, looked promising to explore Devil's Island. There was no wind, which was perfect for Devil's Island. There are numerous sea caves to explore but anchoring there is tricky. The bottom is solid rock and there is no place for an anchor to hook. The best one can do is drop a heavy anchor and chain, letting the weight of anchor rig hold the boat in place. This requires a calm day so that the wind and waves don't carry the boat where you wouldn't want the boat to go.



We got underway around 10:00 AM. Our route would take us from Bayfield, past Basswood Island, Oak Island, Raspberry Island, Bear Island, and finally Devil's Island. After passing Basswood Island the wind began to pick up directly out of the northwest. This changed our plans for Devil's Island as we wouldn't be able to anchor, and the wind would drive the waves into the sea caves. No problem. We stopped at Raspberry Island Lighthouse and went ashore for lunch. After exploring the lighthouse, we headed back to the boat to get underway. We turned east and sailed on to Sand Island for the night.

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Sand Island sits a little over a mile from the Red Cliff Indian Reservation. We anchored in Justice Bay for the night. Some of the participants opted to hike the mile or so to visit Sand Island Lighthouse. We stayed back and explored the sea caves along Swallow Point. There are lots of things one might see in a sea cave. The one thing we saw that I did not expect to see was a rabbit. Another amazing night at anchor.



Wednesday, August 14th, underway about 10:00 AM. We sailed northwest past York Island, Raspberry Island, and Bear Island. This put Devil's Island in view, but we wouldn't be able to visit. The wind was around 10-12 knots providing excellent sailing. We rounded Bear Island and sailed between Otter Island, Manitou Island, and the east side of Oak Island. Our plan was to anchor at Basswood Island for the night, then on to Madeline Island and the marina Thursday. Throughout the day we had heard of rain coming in on Thursday. We made a stop at

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Basswood Island where the group discussed options. Some of the group had to leave on Friday and they opted to head back to Bayfield. A couple of others in the group arranged a slip at the Madeline Island Yacht Club for the night. The rest of us decided to sail on to Madeline Island, anchor out for the night near the marina, and then come into the marina Thursday morning before the rain.



Thursday, August 15th, was overcast when we woke up. We could see the rain developing to southeast of us. Stuart radioed our slip assignments at Madeline Island, and we were able to get tied up and secured just as the rain started moving in. Dora and I decided not to let a bit of rain deter us. We donned foul weather gear and took the short walk into the town of La Pointe. La Pointe is a wonderful little town to explore with shops, restaurants, and a not to be missed museum.



The museum is an adventure through time. Many groups of diverse peoples have made their home here. There are four historic structures to explore, each featuring artifacts and exhibits about Ojibwe, French, British, and Americans, all of which called Madeline Island home at one time or another.

The weather cleared up around 3:00 PM and we were able to shed the foul weather gear. People from the tour boats began showing up and the town experienced a brief increase in population before the last tour boat of the evening headed back to Bayfield.



Friday, August 16th, we had time to visit one more island. Departing Madeline Island Yacht Club around 10:00 AM we sailed south to Long Island. Sailing past the western most point of Long Island and Chequamegon Point Light we turned east to anchor on the south side of Long Island and a place where the island narrows. The narrow strip of island makes it easy to explore both sides of the island.

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We spent most of the day exploring the island. It had been our intent to hike across the island to the north shore, then west to the La Pointe Lighthouse. We made it about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way when deadfall blocked our access, and we had to turn back. We would have to content ourselves by sailing to the north side in the morning and viewing the lighthouse from the boat.



Saturday, August 17th was the last day of the adventure. We sailed to the north side of Long Island to view La Pointe Lighthouse. The strong wind and waves made going ashore a bit risky, so we sailed as close by as possible. From there we sailed back to Bayfield. It was time to pull our boat. We packed up the boat and had lunch with old and new friends. The adventure was over, and we started for home, already making plans to return in 2026.