

Hello from No Rush....

November 10th Update:

Week 26: November 3rd to 9th

Even with visiting friends for 3 days this week we added another 173 miles onto our trip for a total of 4,907 statute miles. We have 250 to 350 miles left depending on the route we choose. The shorter route has an overnight Gulf crossing, and the longer route needs multiple days of good weather.

We have made it back to the Florida Panhandle where our good friends, Greg, and Sue Mourning live. What a wonderful time we had with them. After we visited with Sue's mom who dropped them off at Lulu's for lunch, Sue and Greg joined us for the afternoon on the boat. It was a beautiful day and they told us about the sites we were passing on the intercoastal. We arrived at their yacht club where they had arranged a slip for No Rush while we stayed for a few days with them. The club has a great porch where we enjoyed the view, drinks, and meeting many of their friends.

We were very excited to visit the National Naval Aviation Museum where we had a very knowledgeable docent with many stories about the planes on exhibit. The background information made the tour even better. A large craft show in downtown Pensacola was fun to walk around and learn about new artistic techniques.

Greg and Sue have talked about Flora-Bama, but nothing could have prepared us for how large this honky-tonk and great music venue was. We were able to sit in on the Songwriters Festival for an afternoon that just flew by with great music.

We were sad to say good-bye. We haven't slept off the boat for a few months, so it was a good reminder of what life is like as a "dry lander."

At the next stop on our journey, we were able to meet with more friends from Rochester, Cathy Wall and her brother Jim Corrigan who now lives in Florida. Beth, their cousin, joined them to tour the boat and catch up. It is always fun to get together with friends, “old” and new.

Unfortunately, the rest of our trip has hit a type of roadblock, Tropical Storm **Nicole**. The last time there was a November Hurricane in Florida was in the 1980’s, so of course we have one this year! We ended the week getting the boat, the house and ourselves ready for what Nicole will bring. We stopped heading East and found a protected marina in Panama City.

We want to thank Guy Colson for putting our last hurricane shutter in place at the house and now we wait to see how close the storm comes to both the house and the boat.

Week 25: October 27th to November 2nd

This week we traveled the last 163 miles down the internal river system and completed the last of the 105 locks of the trip. After 4,734 statute miles we feel home is near. We are back in saltwater watching Brown Pelicans diving for fish and seeing dolphins play at our bow.

This week we started at anchor at Edna-2 right on the river. It was 45 degrees outside! I had thought the winter coats could be put away, but we were wearing them again. Edna-2 anchorage was located in a bend in the Tombigbee River. The frightening part of the anchorage was that the Tows came right towards us before they turned around the bend. Fortunately, we anchored behind a shoal so it would have been hard for the barges to get to us. We then traveled to Bashi Creek. We were happily, off the river, safe from the Tows. Bashi is a narrow creek off the river, and we slept soundly at Bashi tied to "Sea Bear" and both shores to stay in place. The next day we went to Bobby’s Fish Camp. Bobby’s is an infamous stop on the Tombigbee River. In the past, Bobby’s had a great restaurant which offered fish dinners.

Unfortunately, there was a change in management and the new manager at Bobby's wasn't at all friendly the first day. It is a small family-owned business that the current manager inherited. We think he was drinking quite a bit the first day and that was why he was so unfriendly. We overheard him saying that he wasn't crazy about "Yankees". We felt compelled to stay there for two nights to wait out a big storm. It was relatively expensive, and they offered no services, so it wasn't a great stop. The rain wasn't quite done when we finally left to travel to the last lock just south, but we were ready to go. After the last lock, we had two anchorages before Fairhope on Mobile Bay. The first anchorage was called "**Three Rivers**". Three Rivers was off the river and very nice after maneuvering around some tree trunks. We had a lovely evening, but an unpleasant surprise when trying to leave. Our anchor became fouled. We spent about an hour and a half trying different approaches to retrieving our anchor. We were grateful that three other looper boats, "Set Free",

"Simplicity" and "Fear Knot" helped us resolve the issue and provided (much needed) moral support. We finally did retrieve our anchor and continued down river. At the next anchorage, "Big Bayou Canot", we were able to "pay it forward". We settled in and rafted to our friend "Sea Bear". Another boat came into the anchorage in the late afternoon. They were inexperienced in anchoring and were having trouble with their anchor windlass. We advised them to set their bow anchor and then we dinghied over to their boat with a long (200') line so we could be their stern anchor. That kept them from swinging into the shore in the narrow anchorage. We all had a restful night. The next day we steamed to Fairhope Marina, dodging tows and working boats in the busy Mobile Bay.

With the worry of the rivers behind us and after much needed showers we investigated Fairhope. I have enjoyed and been impressed by the artwork and history so many of the towns have displayed during this trip and Fairhope did not disappoint. The docent at their history museum at the old town hall was a joy to listen to and learn about this special community that was developed to try the theories of economist Henry George. Georgism economics is based on all land being owned by the community and the only "tax" that you pay is for the land that you lease, regardless of what is built, sold or created on the

land. So, it is a land tax, not a property tax and what a person makes off of that land they keep. With federal, state and county taxes now, the system is not pure, but the land is still community owned, now by a non-profit that keeps community goals supported. This includes keeping the waterfront available to all and beautiful flowers and gardens everywhere. I am glad we visited.

Week 24: October 20th to 26th

This week we traveled 196 miles and went through 7 locks for a total of 4,570 statute miles.

Yea, we only have one lock left then we will be back to tidal waters. We haven't thought about tides since the Hudson River last July.

We have added another bird to our watch list this week, the Kingfisher. We have seen over a dozen along the way. Their white necks shine in the fading colors of the trees. We have continued to see a few Bald Eagles and a flock of White Pelicans.

We had some brief moments of concern when we touched bottom twice this week. Once was when the green light FINALLY lit indicating we can go into a lock. We didn't realize we had drifted into shallow water during the long wait. The light turned green, we tried to go and couldn't. Mitch was able to back out of the spot with some effort and luckily, we were only in mud. We made it to the lock. The second time we were crossing paths with a tow. We went to the requested side of the river and were well within the marked channel, but the bottom had obviously shifted, and we suddenly slowed down. We were lucky here in that it was a small shoal, and our momentum took us through. It was very scary as we were right next to the barge.

We had some early morning starts to get through the locks as a group as the lock masters preferred, before separating and boating at our own pace. The remnants of the cold wave that had started last week made this week's early morning starts more difficult with the addition of fog. In Demopolis, we were especially glad that there wasn't any fog because we had to travel to the lock in the dark. This day the lock was closed from 7-11 AM for maintenance so we had to make sure we were tied up in the lock by 6:30 AM. Our reward for traveling in the dark was a pretty sunrise in the lock.

After weeks and weeks of planning, studying, and worrying about this lower river section we are finally here. What makes this area different is that we must anchor out in very remote areas. We are too slow a boat to go the 100 miles plus between each of the limited marinas. We have been tracking where other boats have anchored, talked to everyone we could: past loopers, non-loopers that have traveled the rivers for years, and found new resources from other first time river travelers. We have enjoyed the 3 anchorages where we have stayed. The weather has been clear for stargazing, the winds favorable, plenty of room to swing on the anchor and "good holding" (boat speak for the anchor held). We have enjoyed our time "on the hook" much more than we thought we would.

We have been "buddy boating" with Matt on a boat named Sea Bear. Like our friend, Tom, Matt is doing the loop single handed. He has a 26-foot sailboat and has a lot of experience anchoring. He didn't want to be alone in the desolate part of the rivers any more than we did and having another boat near has made the anchorages more fun. Matt has taught us a lot about anchoring so our confidence in this area is slowly growing. We finally learned how to use our fish finder to examine anchorages for potential snags by examining the bottom conditions. Matt also taught us how to "scope" out an anchorage with his depth sounder.

Week 23: October 13th to 19th

This week travelled 77 miles on the Tenn-Tom for a total of 4,374 statute miles. "The *Tennessee–Tombigbee Waterway* is a 234-mile artificial U.S. waterway built in the 20th century from the Tennessee River to the junction of the Black Warrior-Tombigbee River system near Demopolis, Alabama." Wikipedia.

I have found the rivers to be very interesting. I love watching the birds and the scenery. What I don't like are the tows and the locks. This week started with a 40-mile day without any locks. It was wonderfully relaxing going to Bay Springs Marina. Not only was the trip relaxing, but the marina had everything we needed.

In other waterways we have travelled each lock varied lock to lock on how to attach to the walls for the change in water level. Some locks had ropes hanging to hold on to, others had cables attached to the top and bottom that you wrap one of your lines around and others you might wrap lines around rungs of a ladder. Along the rivers the locks are very consistent with floating bollards in multiple locations along each wall to loop a line around. I am always relieved when the bollard we have lassoed starts descending with us when the water starts to drop. Sometimes a bollard or two can be noisy as they descend in their chambers and sometimes, they only rattle a little bit, but one day this week before Midway all of the bollards were singing a cacophony that echoed around the lock.

I found it hard to believe that it was already time for the fuel filters and the oil to be changed again. We decided to stay a few days in Midway Marina to get ready for the next two weeks where there are few marinas and no service support. As usual when we work on the boat, we learn something new. The boat would not start after the oil change, which was very odd. We finally figured out that the gear neutral starter switch has a connection very near the oil filter. We must have pulled the connector apart getting the filter out of its very tight spot. It is good to know that the connector is there. Each of the three nights we were at Midway we met many more loopers. About 6 boats would overnight on their way south.

The weather forecast was sure right about the cold front coming through. Going through the Fulton Lock in the early morning, fog was coming off of the wet lock walls as we were lowered. We spent an extra night at Smithville Marina so we could have power to run our heater as temperatures dropped to 30 degrees. We had warm clothes, but we had expected to only need them in Canada, not Mississippi. Frost covered docks and decks are very slippery.

Week 22: October 6th to 12th

This week we traveled 114 miles making our trip total of 4,297.

This week, we had to make the decision regarding when to go south. The official hurricane season ends on November 30th. After the scare with Ian, the last thing we wanted was to go to a place with the possibility of a hurricane or tropical storm. On the other hand, we are ready to head home. The closest analogy is like a horse going to the barn. We fretted and consulted with a meteorologist that Mitch knows from work. He gave the ok to head home! The slower we went the less the chance of running into hurricane issues. We then devised a plan/schedule. We decided to target Mobile, Alabama for Halloween and made all the reservations at marines on the way.

Our long-time travel companion, Tom on ***Dancing Bears***, (and his dog Ripple), had longtime friends, Betty, and Gary, who lived near Clifton Marina. They graciously invited us to their beautiful house/estate on the Tennessee River they call Getty Landing. They have 55 acres on the river. They own a bluff which overlooks the river with an amazing view. They also took us to a local restaurant for catfish dinners.

After Clifton, where our dock was right next to the bar, we went to Pickwick State Park. We hired a local guide, Larry, who gave us a tour of the Shiloh Battlefield. Larry was amazing. He had relatives that actually fought in the battle and are buried in the Shiloh cemetery. He gave us a great tour. Shiloh was General Grant's second Union victory and another key battle in the Civil War. There were over 23,000 casualties in 1 and 1/2 days of fighting. We got a

good understanding of the battle and the decisions made by the Union and Confederate commanders. Larry also had a museum of artifacts and is an aspiring guitar player/singer.

On our last evening at Pickwick State Park, both old looper friends and some new boating friends all joined together for a wonderful potluck dinner on the dock.

Next stop was Grand Harbor. We went with our fellow looper boater buddies to dinner in a local restaurant that was run by a ministry to help people who have drug addictions. The restaurant is a local favorite for BBQ. We had a great dinner and company. Our looper buddy boaters decided that they all wanted to take a 500-mile (round trip) side trip to Chattanooga. They were concerned about the impact of Ian on Florida and wanted to give more time to let things settle down. Our friend Tom wanted to winter in Chattanooga and then head west to Puget Sound/Alaska. We made the decision to skip that side trip and head south, so we had to say goodbye to our friends. We wished them safe travels and went our separate ways.

Week 21: September 29th to October 5th

We only boated 40 miles for a total of 4,183 statute miles, but we put many more miles on Ron and Marylou's car!

We stayed at Paris Landing Marina for 6 nights which is a record for our trip. The only other long stay was in Luddington, Michigan while waiting for a weather window for Lake Michigan. Land Between the Lakes (LBL), is a large Federal Park between the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. We spent one day exploring the park. This included a working mid-1800's farm. One of the crops grown back then was tobacco. The tobacco was dried in sheds. They had a bunch of nicotine addicted sheep that hung around the tobacco fields and drying shed. Another highlight was a drive through bison and elk prairie. It was the perfect time to be there because the elk bucks were actively gathering their harems, bugling, and fighting. It was amazing to see them so active and so close. We also did a hike in a wetland.

We spent one day at Fort Donelson national battlefield. This was a significant Civil War battle. It was General Grant's first Civil War victory and where he earned the nickname "Unconditional Surrender" Grant. The Confederate leader was a former friend of Grant. This battle allowed the North to control the rivers and was a precursor to the Battle at Shiloh.

We visited and hiked a National Wildlife area that is part of a string of Federal areas that supports waterfowl migration. The extravagant visitor's center was hosting a school group the day we visited. They had a "Butterfly Release," which was watching Monarch butterfly's that just emerged from a cocoon fly away. They also had a beekeeper demonstration but no "bee releases" that day!

It was a great few days with campfires, cocktails, dinners out and cookouts with Ron and Marylou.

After Paris, we went to Birdsong. Birdsong Marina is off the Tennessee River on Birdsong Creek. When we made our reservation, we were given specific directions regarding how to stay in the channel by following some private markers. The boat ahead of us didn't follow all the instructions and went hard aground right ahead of us. They called us on the radio and advised us not to follow them. We made it through. The other boat called the towing service and was at the dock a couple hours later. They had a rough day, so we decided to take the courtesy car and join them for dinner out. We picked a local Mexican Restaurant and were shocked that the restaurant didn't serve alcohol because the other loopers that went aground really wanted to get a drink after their challenging day.

Birdsong is famous (at least locally) for having the only fresh-water pearl cultivation facility outside of Asia. The marina owners were very proud of this and invited/insisted that we attend a lecture/tour of the facility. The presentation was interesting but about 1.5 hours too long. The facility was functional but a bit rustic. The next morning, we waited for the heavy fog to clear so we could follow the markers through the creek and to the Tennessee River without running aground.

Week 20: September 22nd to 28th

This week's 297 miles saw us finish both the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Our total mileage now stands at 4,144 statute miles.

This week was also a week of worrying about the house in Florida and Hurricane Ian. At one point Ian was aiming at our front door. We started looking for places to leave our boat and head home to pick up the pieces. We want to thank our wonderful neighbors, Kristen, and Bryan, who masterfully installed the hurricane fabric over our front bay window and doorway. Thanks to them the house was as ready as it could be. We are thankful that Ian moved away from our house, but we feel badly for those, in South Florida, that it did impact.

Leaving Hoppies where we got our *Levee High Apple Pie*, we knew we were facing 3 nights of anchoring along the Mississippi River going down stream then we will take the turn to go against the current on the Ohio River. There were many unknowns such as the speed of the currents of both the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, so it is difficult to predict how far we can go each day. Also, the rivers are much lower than in recent years, so the quality of the anchorages are in question. Kaskaskia River Lock is a common stopping point that used to have facilities to tie to, but dredging has just started so we won't know until we get there if the lockmaster will allow us to even anchor. The advantage of this and another anchorage called Little Divergence Canal is that you get totally off of the Mississippi and away from the tows and barges. We knew our last stop on the Mississippi was going to be in more open water at Angelo Tow.

We were able to snake by the extensive dredging barges and had an uneventful anchorage at Kaskaskia. Our next planned stop, Little Divergence Canal, thankfully, had enough water to use. It was narrow and had almost no current, so we put out a second anchor aft to keep lined up with the canal. Angelo Tow was pleasant with the exception of a big wake from a large looper boat that dumped everything from our table (we met that boat at a marine later and they apologized). The tows put out a big wake behind them but not much to the sides, so they didn't bother us. Entering the Ohio River, we got a

pleasant surprise to find relatively little current and were able to make it through the lock and onto Paducah without any issues until we tried to dock.

Almost every day has its glitch and docking in Paducah was that day's glitch. There is limited space at the Paducah docks, and we had reservations, so we thought we were all set. Unfortunately, we arrived on a Sunday when the marina was not staffed, so it did not matter that we had reservations. It had unofficially become a first come-first get docking situation. When we made the reservations, they requested that we not arrive until after 3pm, we did what they asked but at that time all of the spaces were taken. There was some room at the fuel dock, but it was a challenge to get there because there was shoaling on that side of the marina. With the help of some other loopers, we were able to reach it by threading the needle between the shoal and the boats tied to the dock.

The Cumberland River is less intimidating than the Ohio and Mississippi and we had an easy cruise to Green Turtle Bay where we spent two days catching up on chores. After another lock, we started down Tennessee River/Kentucky Lake to Paris Landing State Park to get together with friends who drove out from North Carolina to see us, Ron, and Mary Lou.

Week 19: September 15th to 21st

This week we picked up the pace having covered 301 miles for a total of 3,846 statute miles.

It was the week of flight. We have continued to see many monarch butterflies and this week added over a couple of dozen bald eagles and flocks of white pelicans! There were also the 2 Asian carp that "flew" into our dinghy!

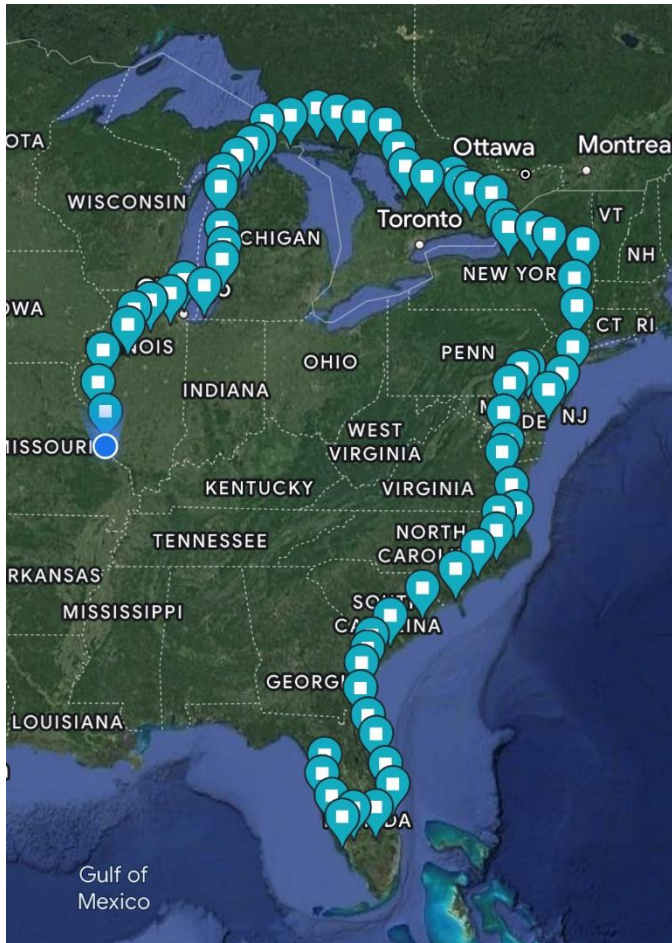
Boating down the rivers has been very different from the rest of the trip. With fewer places to stop and forced waits at large locks we find ourselves traveling in large packs of looper boats. We mingle around before locks, some anchoring and some not. Then we file into the locks in the order requested by the lock master, usually larger boats first so if we need to raft up the larger

boats are on the walls with smaller boats tied to them. This leads to the smaller slower boats getting out of the locks first and the next few miles we get passed by the faster boats as we each find our favorite cruising speeds. This dance is played out again at the next lock unless there is a harbor between locks where we all gather again to be off in a parade the next morning. Heritage harbor was one such marina between locks. On the morning we left we needed to leave early to get to the next lock before commercial traffic took precedence, but this morning we had fog. So, as each boat joined the morning parade out of the harbor they disappeared into the fog.

Much of loop planning is centered around food, so being able to stop where a town is within walking distance is optimal. Along the rivers so far this has been more difficult than most of the trip. Not because there are not towns, but because it is so difficult to build harbors that can survive 40-foot flood waters, winter ice and sifting shoals. More traditional harbors such as Peoria Boat Club, Grafton and Alton have 2-to-3-foot diameter posts that go 30 to 40 feet in the air for the floating docks to ride on. Some of these docks have roofs that are also attached to the docks, so they float along with them. Other docking locations like Logson Tug and Hoppies have old barges you tie to and have steep stairs and/or hills to climb to reach the road or town. The climb from Henry's Marina yielded a tasty "Big Ass Burrito" as it was listed on the menu at the small local diner, Logston Tow's hike provided a choice of 5 Mexican restaurants after conquering the equipment and steel steps and the hike at Hoppie's rewarded us with a "Levee High Apple Pie" that commemorated the saving of the town by its levee.

We had another Kodak moment for the trip this week when we passed the Gateway Arch in St. Louis. Unfortunately, it was difficult to enjoy the moment with all of the commercial traffic in this busy port city.

When you start learning about the loop there are things you read that stand out as something you are really looking forward to liking those Kodak moments, but there are also parts of the loop you fear. One of these places for us is called the Chain of Rocks. We have read reports of boaters missing a turn and having to be rescued and their boats being destroyed. This week we went



past The Chain of Rocks. I placed additional markers on our charts, and I was ready to take a picture of this "danger" sign as we followed the directions. Well, there wasn't any special big danger sign, just a standard "Lock" sign with an arrow! We easily stayed left and went to the lock.

Week 18: September 8th to 14th

This week's 169 miles had us finishing the great lakes part of the adventure and starting the rivers section. We are now on Central Time and have travelled a total of 3,545 statute miles. Here is our route to date.

Just as we continue to see Monarch Butterflies, we also continue to see Dave and Wendy Hazlett. They were driving by Michigan City when we were there, and we got to visit again. We are so lucky to have such great friends.

When we see marinas with gas grills, we check to see where the nearest grocery store is located. We miss a good grilled steak, so we were excited to see the grills in Michigan City. Unfortunately, there was not a convenient grocery store. We did, though, find a butcher shop! The butcher not only had meat to grill, but also had smoked chicken breast which was great for sandwiches for the next few days.

Paul and Joyce on Four Pikes completed their loop in Chicago. We will miss bumping into them the rest of our loop. Joyce, though, made time to give us a tour of Chicago when we arrived. It was great fun to see them again before we left.

It was finally time to start down the rivers. Our first day started with going down the Chicago River in downtown Chicago. Even though the weather was cold, rainy, and windy, being surrounded by the city was entertaining and impressive. After a long and stressful first day on the rivers it was so nice to have not one, but two offers to raft off of friend's boats on the Joliet wall. We had worried for so long about what we were going to do if there wasn't room for us on the wall in Joliet, and now we were on our way there to see welcoming faces.

The second day on the rivers we got to experience some of the craziness of going through locks. Commercial traffic always gets priority, so your wait time can be none to hours and sometimes you just anchor while you wait. We ended up getting to Heritage Harbor just as it was getting dark due to delays. Luckily at this harbor they track us on NEBO and AIS and were ready for our large group's late arrival. They helped each one of dock and made us feel very welcome. We stayed two nights to catch up. They even had a courtesy van and a group of us went to town to do laundry and shopping. We also felt much better prepared for the rest of the rivers after a 2.5-hour seminar that was provided for free.

Week 17: September 1st to 7th

This week we boated 145 miles for a trip total of 3,376 statute miles.

We used our folding bikes again and enjoyed the Maritime Museum and submarine tour in Muskegon. There was a nice bike path most of the way. I especially enjoyed the display on the history of periscope design.

With Ray's help in Oswego, we were able to install 2 solar panels and the needed controller box to directly charge the boat batteries. (Our old generator still works, but we don't know for how long and it is very noisy.) Since then, we have extended our system to a third panel and now have the capability of

connecting our camping stand-alone panel to the system when we are not under way. This came in very useful when the marina we wanted to stay at in Muskegon only had space at a dock that didn't have power. We were able to fully charge the batteries, even on a cloudy day. This success also gives us confidence that we should not have to use our generator when we are on a mooring ball in Chicago.

Being on the smaller side for a looper boat we are sometimes able to fit into marina's where others can't, but I think we were too heavy for the dock in Holland, MI. I think they should not only assign docks by boat length and width, but also weight. I thought we were going to rip out the piling our stern was tied to, so I spread out the force to the piling on the other side of the finger to distribute the force. The finger pier was much steadier after the change.

I include at the bottom of each weekly update a link to our location on an app called Nebo. Many of the looper boats use this app so we can keep track of friends and even check with other loopers who might give us information on where we are thinking of going. Last March when I was playing with the app, I did a search for No Rush to see if our onboard tracker was working. The app surprised me by showing 2 boats named No Rush! Not only that but the other No Rush is the same kind of boat we have! Well, this week we made it to their home harbor just before they started their loop experience and were able to meet them. With their "newly starting" energy they are well ahead of us down the rivers. We wish them a safe adventure.

It must be time to head south. We saw our first "V" of Canada geese heading south this week. What has been odd, though, is that we have started seeing a lot of Monarch Butterflies heading northwest. I need to do more research.

There are many paths that loopers can take to get to Lake Michigan, but all those going counterclockwise have to exit Lake Michigan near Chicago. So, as we approach Chicago and there are fewer, but larger ports, we start forming larger assemblies and are meeting many new people just like the geese.

Week 16: August 25th to 31st, 2022

This week we mostly waited for the winds to calm and only traveled 55 miles for a total of 3,232 statute miles.

In Manistee we met 2 loop boats we had never seen before and enjoyed visiting with a couple sailing their boat around Lake Michigan. We were just about the only boaters at the public docks. We were nervous coming into the dock as it is known to have strong currents, but it ended up there was only current when we left. Mitch did a beautiful, planned pirouette as we left, letting the current take our stern and rotate around 270 degrees to go back out of the river.

Manistee has a great riverwalk that goes from the beach at the Lake Michigan inlet all the way downtown to the American Legion Post 10, where we caught their weekly fish fry on Friday with the crew from Turtle Kraal.

Ludington is the home of the last coal fired steam driven ferry in the US called the ***Badger***. Seeing it come into port and dock is quite a sight. It actually drops its anchor and rotates on it to put the stern first into the dock. We haven't tried to do that maneuver in our boat, yet.

With so many loopers stuck due to weather in Ludington we got to visit with many new loopers and a few old friends. We also enjoyed a maritime museum, cooking out on the marina's gas grill and an evening of music in the park. With the summer coming to an end, we will miss the local bands playing in the parks.

Week 15: August 18th to 24th, 2022

This week we traveled 146 miles along the east branch of The Great Traverse Bay for a total of 3,176 statute miles for our adventure.

We were sad to have our visits with Dave and Wendy done, but we were thrilled that we not only got to meet up with them in Charlevoix as planned, but also in Leland. This week we got an additional bonus when we met up

again in Northport! Their weekend sailing visitors, Rich, and Barb were from this area and invited us to a great outdoors wood fired Pizza place. Pizza will never be that good again.

Well, Mitch rode his first ebike in Traverse City. They have a great bicycle path, and we were able to cover much more territory than with our folding bicycles (especially since one of our errands was to get a new tube for a flat tire on Mitch's folding bicycle). I see ebikes or powered scooters in our future.

Traverse City also had great public transportation. From where we were docked at Elmwood Township Marina just north of Traverse City we could ride a bus to Suttons Bay, another quaint harbor town 14 miles north. And they had a free tour bus in downtown Traverse City which enabled us to visit both east and west bays.

I have included only one of the many pictures of the sand dunes that we have seen along the shore, but pictures cannot capture the view of miles of shore that have these dunes, nor the incredible heights of many of them. Often, we see houses built on top and wonder how with the water and wind beaten dunes they are still standing.

We finally stayed at a marina with a pool in Frankfort. We had a great time talking to other boaters, but never got to see the town. Oops.

Week 14: August 11 to 17

We travelled 140 miles and began enjoying the beautiful state of Michigan. We have now boated a total of 3,030 statute miles.

We made it to Mackinac Island! I have heard of the uniqueness of Mackinac Island with its horse drawn vehicles (including garbage haulers), quaint town, and fudge for decades, but never understood what makes it so special until we were there. As Mitch says it has a "Disney Magic" feel that you don't get until you have been there. We unfolded our bicycles, rode around the island, and saw beautiful views, walked down the main street, listened to a concert

in the park and, yes, we even had some fudge. I am so glad that Mitch worked so hard to get a slip reservation so we could take "No Rush" and not be tied to the ferry schedule. Those ferries, though, travelling at 30mph, constantly coming, and going, made entering and exiting the harbor quite the challenge!

Lake Michigan's exceptional beauty has been a total surprise to us. During our trip preparations what stood out about this area was that there are "ports of refuge" every 20 miles. We interpreted this as "beware, there will be bad weather on this big bad lake", so we expected to be fighting the weather, but instead we enjoyed all of the northeastern shore of Lake Michigan. The weather has been beautiful and all of the towns we visited: Petoskey, East Jordan, Charlevoix, and Leland, were great fun.

East Jordan on Lake Charlevoix was the perfect spot to catch our breaths and catch up on chores after the push to Mackinac Island. The trip down the lake was beautiful and reminded us of the finger lakes. We were able to change the engine oil, find someone that wanted the used oil, change a fuel filter, and even get the propane tank topped off. The town had everything we needed, and the marina was small and quiet. There was even an art walk and an old train engine on display in the nearby park. I also learned that cedar waxwings eat spiders. The birds would dive down, hover for a couple of wing beats while they plucked the spiders off their webs under the large pier then quickly flew away.

After much planning and changes in weather we were able to get together with friends we originally met in Rochester in the 1980's who now live in Milwaukee. We were able to not only see Dave and Wendy Hazlett in Charlevoix, but also in Leland. We so appreciate that they synched up with us during their sail around Lake Michigan for a fun visit.

Not only have we visited with family and friends and made new looper friends, but we have also enjoyed meeting other local boaters.

August 15th Update:

We traveled 285 miles this week and have completed our adventures in Canada. Our total miles traveled are now 2,890 statute miles. This week was spent in Georgian Bay and the North Channel of Lake Huron.

It also was the week of the rodents, no, minks are not rodents.... the week of the small furry creatures, no, beavers are not that small. Okay we started the week in Snug Harbor to the pitter patter of little feet overhead. There was a squirrel on our deck! Luckily, it left on its own. Then in Spanish we saw a fearless mink and in Blind Harbor two large beavers were enjoying their evening meals behind our boat! We were up close to nature even in the marinas.

Other firsts this week were: being out in fog and getting a tornado warning, (phones and vhf radio lit up at the same time) and spending a whole day steering from the lower helm because of the rain. We still prefer steering from the upper helm, but the lower helm has advantages.

Once again, our smaller boat let us get under a swing bridge and therefore getting a great spot on the wall at Little Current. The size also enabled us to get a spot in Spanish Harbor!

Anchoring at the Benjamin's was beautiful, and it was a very calm evening. It was also a great place for a swim in Lake Huron.

We are back in the states and soon after we were approved for US entry over the internet by CBP, a lovely bald eagle gave us a fly by as we entered the US Waters in Detour pass.

Leaving Canada behind, we have also left one of our buddy boats, Sunshine, behind. There are many ways to travel the loop and Cindy and Pat on Sunshine are leaving their boat in Canada for the winter and returning next spring to continue. Pat has a lot of experience maintaining diesel engines. We have traveled on and off with them since Charleston where we met. Our other frequent buddy boat is Dancing Bears. We first saw Tom with his dog Ripple in Jacksonville, FL, but didn't meet them until we were farther north. Sharing

experiences, knowledge on weather tracking, navigation and anything else boating Tom has really helped us navigate especially through some tricky parts of NJ and long stretches in Canada. These are some of the many friendships we have made, and we look forward to meeting and learning from many more boaters as we continue.

August 7th Update:

This week we boated 120 miles and traversed our last 4 locks on the Trent-Severn. We have now travelled a total of 2,607 miles.

This week started with a big day going through a very special lock called The Big Chute. What a day! With storms in the forecast, our plans were to go until it rained to get closer to the big chute, so we were in line to go through on Friday, before the expected craziness of a 3-day Canadian holiday weekend. We overachieved and finished the day having done The Big Chute.

We had 13 miles to Lock 42, 17 miles to 43 and another 8 miles to Lock 44, The Big Chute, so it was going to take us over 5 hours plus time to go through the locks if we went all the way. Also, in Port Orillia, there were more than a dozen other boats doing the loop, many of them wanting to get through the Chute by the weekend when size restrictions were imposed. So, when we left at 7AM with plans to be at the first lock when it opened, we left with 8 other boats thinking the same thing. Unfortunately, only 4 will fit at a time in the first smaller lock and we expected there to be boats at this lock that had stayed overnight here to catch the opening at 9! Well, with us being a slower boat we ended up behind 6 boats as the channel narrowed. Then there was a radio call about a 14-foot-high railroad swing bridge that was closed ahead. I dug out our summary of "how low can you go, if you take down parts of the boat" sheet and found that if we lower the Bimini, 2 antennas and remove the davit and duck out heads, we can go under a 12-foot bridge! So, as Mitch expertly passed 6 boats in the narrow channel, I prepared the boat and under the bridge we went! We were living a "tortoise vs hare" moment! Then, not only did we make it to the lock before it opened, but again because of No Rush's shorter than average looper boat length we were able to fit into the lock for the first cycle!

We watched a storm front on radar weather apps on our phones as we approached the next lock. After tying at the top, we were told that they would not run if there is lightning. They let us lock through, but after we dropped 47 feet (!!) it started to rain. Fortunately, we were able to tie up at a lower wall. Unfortunately, we were last out of the lock and got soaked while tying up. We expected we were done for the day and we're happy that we could easily get to The Big Chute before it opened the next day. Then the sun came out and the radar cleared... off we went, not having had enough adventure for one day.

There it was, The Big Chute Railway and just as we got to the basin a spot just our size (again) opened up on the "blue line". (Each lock has a blue line, blue painted cement wall where you can tie up your boat and wait your turn to go into the locks. If there isn't room on the blue line, then you have to wait your turn trying to stay stationary in the moving water in front of the lock.) We were tied up on the blue line and that was such a relief. We were staged to go through.

We enjoyed Midland where our dock was right downtown and caught up with other loopers we had met along the trip. This was the jumping off point for the next phase of the trip, gorgeous Georgian Bay. We had a lot of planning to do after being so focused on the TSW.

We had great luck finding a spot on a dock on Beausoleil Island, a Canadian National Park, where we took hikes, long dinghy rides and visited with old and new friends. Mitch even found a replacement cleat for the fender that got damaged in a lock on one of his dinghy excursions to town 3 miles away.

Our week concluded with yet another new-to-us event. We anchored with a stern tie to shore. We definitely need more practice, but it worked!

July 31st Update

During week eleven we took our time enjoying the Trent-Severn Waterway and only went 109 miles and through 20 locks. We have now travelled a total of 2487 miles.

As I previewed last week, the Trent-Severn Waterway has 2 lift locks. We did them both this week. The first one we went up. It was a very smooth ride, and our boat faced the wall. The second one we went down, so in this second one you basically boat to a cliff edge and tie your boat there and face out overlooking the scenery 55 feet below. Mitch did a great job taking movies during both locks while I held on and tried not to look down. Mitch posted his videos on FB, but here is a link that has more details:

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/trentsevern/visit/posteeclusage-lockstation/ecluse-lock-21-ascenseur-liftlock-peterborough>

We are now in the land of gray and PINK granite. I love looking at it except when the navigation charts say a rock is at -2 feet, meaning it is sticking out of the water 2 feet!

We have enjoyed seeing and hearing many loons and the black squirrels continue to be plentiful. Each lock has its own characteristics some being in the middle of towns and others like Lovesick # 30 where we spent two nights relaxing are in the middle of beautiful country.

The week concluded with the second lift lock at Kirkfield and a quiet night at lock 39, Portage, in preparation of traversing Lake Simcoe early the next day before the winds pick up. We have had beautiful weather, but we continue to watch for fair winds when making larger crossings. We have learned our lesson.

July 24th Update:

Wow, week 10 already! We have gone through 19 locks and travelled 189 miles this week for a total of 2377.

We have made it to Canada and cleared customs without any issue while we were at Prinyer's Cove. What a beautiful, quiet spot. I could have stayed there for a week.

Trent Marina in Quinte West was quite the contrast to Prinyer's Cove, but lots of fun. The marina has 300 slips, grills, picnic tables, and the town had a farmer's market and street festival to keep us busy. And if that wasn't enough excitement, one evening there was a drone and fireworks show and we had front row seats on our flybridge!

During our first 6 locks on the Trent-Severn Waterway we rafted up (tied to another boat) to a boat we first saw at the fuel dock that morning. With boating and especially doing the loop in common, friendships form quickly. The first dozen locks boats could only tie to cables on the Starboard side. By rafting up, more boats can get through a lock at one time. Later that first evening Dave and Julia gathered all the boaters staying at lock 6 and we heard about other people's plans, motivations, and histories. What a great first day on the TSW.

It is crazy how many locks on the TSW are run on peoplepower. The Lock Masters hand crank gears to open and close water flow and they walk in circles pushing lever arms to rotate sets of gears to open and close the gates. One lock we went through only had one functioning door after one of the 120-year-old gate gears failed 2 days before we got there. Luckily, No Rush was narrow enough to get through. Their forge was making the replacement.

We have been told that there is a heat wave here but coming from Florida we think the weather is perfect.

We have finally gotten to loon country. I love seeing them and hearing their calls. Other unusual animals have seen are swans and black squirrels. Unfortunately, we have also seen too many deer flies, ouch.

Pictures: Thank you to other boaters who have sent us pictures of No Rush

July 15th Update:

Week 9 we travelled only 122 miles for a total of 2,188 statute miles.

In 4 days on the Erie and Oswego canals we went through 17 more locks before staying in Oswego, NY to prepare for our next phase of the trip into Canada.

We found that we preferred going down in a lock rather than going up. The water has much less turbulence.

Ray was a good sport and collected packages at his home for a week in Rochester for not only us, but also for friends. It is difficult to have packages shipped when you don't know where you are going to be! Ray was able to make his deliveries, help us with the boat and even stay overnight. We had such a nice visit. It was sad to see him go.

Ray wasn't our only visitor from Rochester, though. We had a fun visit with Doug, Cindy, Betsy & Jeff who joined us for dinner the first night we were in Oswego.

We now have solar panels, so we are less reliant on our ancient generator for charging the house battery bank and thanks to Ray's help we were able to replace a cracked window. After other maintenance we think we are ready to cross Lake Ontario and start our adventures in Canada!

PS – As of 1600hrs, July 17th they are in Frankford, Canada in a canal lock on the Trent River.

July 9th Update:

We travelled 332 miles in week 8 for a total of 2066 miles.

Riding the tide up the Hudson was gorgeous and relaxing. Which is what we really needed after another stressful week of trying to select weather windows to travel the Atlantic. We started the week in Atlantic City after a beautiful

outside passage from Cape May, then finished travelling in New Jersey on the NJ Intercoastal Waterway which is known for its shallow water and found it very enjoyable. We pushed hard to get to Manasquan Inlet to make the small weather window for the Atlantic passage to New York Harbor on the Friday of the 4th of July holiday weekend.

Boating up the center of the Hudson River I felt like I was in a model train layout with trains travelling North and South on both sides. The views were wonderful, and we enjoyed the Bald Eagles flying by.

We had an unplanned stop in Kingston due to some issues with our fuel filters. The municipal marina was very helpful and connected us with a great mechanic who helped us on Sunday of the 4th of July weekend!

We made it to the Erie Canal! In Waterford we were welcomed by a friend visiting from Florida who had done the loop in an electric boat. One of the crew on his trip lives in Waterford and we joined them for a wonderful, traditional, backyard, 4th of July picnic.

The East end start to the Erie Canal has 5 locks back-to-back, where each one lifts you between 30 and 35 feet. By the end of week 8 we had taken 13 locks. You would think that they would get to be routine, but they haven't yet. Each one is a little different: there are different options for attachments to hold on to and the spacings of those attachments; sometimes you are only allowed to use the starboard side and sometimes only port side; sometimes you are the only one in the lock and sometimes it is a tight squeeze; and sometimes you have to hold station or attach to a wall for long waiting times for the locks to open.

We finished week 8 with meeting up with 2 friends who have homes in the Adirondacks. Sandy Simpson and Dave Hockey each made time to visit us when we docked at a park in Canajoharie. It was great catching up on a beautiful evening. Thank you, Dave, and Sandy!

July 1st Update:

Week 7 we travelled 193 miles for a total of 1733.

Week 7 we had the pleasure of getting together with more family. Julia, Chris, CJ and little 2-year-old Gigi Killian visited us at the dock in Chesapeake City. Not only did they bring pizza, but they picked up a much-needed oil filter for us. We enjoyed seeing how much CJ has grown and are so glad we got to meet the independent Gigi.

What a week this was for learning about predicting the safest times to travel. At both Chesapeake City where we had met up with 2 other loop boats we had befriended earlier in the trip and in Delaware City where we added one more boat to our armada, the discussions were all about weather, tides, currents and what apps and websites we use to try to determine when we should go down the Delaware River and Bay. In Delaware City there is even a briefing that the local specialist provides which include fun facts like, “it can get really nasty out there,” “the bail out point really isn’t a very good option” and “there isn’t any help to get along the trip, so choose your departure day and time carefully.” After all of the conversations and reviewing of data multiple times, we waited 3 days and left at 5:15AM to get the best window. Our starting point was on the original C&D canal where when we arrived, they rotated our boats at the dock using our lines because the canal is so narrow. Our trip was a little rolly but could have been much worse.

We used these improved prediction skills to decide whether to go from Cape May to Atlantic City on the very shallow NJ ICW or to commit to 50 miles along the Atlantic coast. The “outside” path won that day, and it was a beautiful day to be on the Atlantic. At one point we kept seeing reflections in the water and when we got up to them, we found that it was the sun reflecting off of the backs of a large number of dolphins. We always enjoy seeing dolphins!

June 23rd Update:

Week 6 and we travelled 204 miles for a total of 1540.

We were entertained for hours one day when we listened to the Navy training their security boats on how to handle obnoxious people who wander too close to security areas. Like: "***this is rubber ducky, can't I just get my crab pot? I have to make a living.***". Or "***How big is the gun on that thing? How fast does it go?***"

We have enjoyed many nights at anchor in calm and in storms, so our confidence about setting an anchor that will hold was high. Well, that is no longer true. An amazing line squall hit us right after we anchored in Deltaville and one of the gusts had us dragging the anchor. Mitch was able to start the engine, avoid the other anchored boats and the boats docked at the marina that we were being blown towards AND not run over the anchor line! We re-anchored after the storm and put out much more rode. The next two days at anchor waiting for the weather to improve, I was constantly monitoring our GPS location to verify we were not dragging the anchor again.

We really enjoyed Yorktown. The Town has a great Revolutionary Museum, free trollies to get around and music at the waterfront on Thursday nights that we could enjoy from our fly bridge on a beautiful evening.

We enjoyed visiting Annapolis, also. Oh, it was great to see so many sail boats and the kids' summer camp groups all out sailing all kinds of single-handed small boats. The Naval Academy has a beautiful campus, and the waterfront has buildings over 300 years old.

June 19th Update:

Week 5 we added 63 miles to our adventure for a total of 1335 miles.

We started the week having the Dismal Swamp to ourselves and then popped out of the swamp just a few miles from one of the busiest ports in the world, Norfolk, VA. We went from watching bald eagles to watching out for large ships.

We had two beautiful days on the Dismal Swamp Canal that was hand dug in the late 1700's. We could have done without the deer flies, but the reflections on the water, birds including Bald Eagles and fireflies were totally a pleasure.

We ended up at the town docks in Portsmouth, VA as a result of threatening weather and had a very nice time seeing the sites including walking around the historic district.

June 9th Update:

We added 331 miles this week for a total of 1272.

Twice this week we had challenging weather. We thought a thunderstorm was going to pass to the north of us, but it didn't. Previous practice with the radar and GPS got us through the low visibility and we were able to get to a good anchorage before the second storm hit.

The second challenge was in the Neuse River & Pamlico Sound from Oriental to Belhaven, NC. We had previously travelled in winds of the strength we saw, but with the fetch being so much longer the waves were that much bigger. It was a long uncomfortable ride and we learned about more options in our weather apps, so we were prepared for Albemarle Sound and had a good weather and wave window to cross.

We did much better with anchorages this week. With two of them being calm, quiet, and close to nature. They were peaceful and we slept well.

We have also enjoyed learning about the history of many small towns along the way. Elizabeth City has a great museum.

We expected to run into a thunderstorm at some point and that we would have some rougher seas, but we never expected the heartbreak when we were notified of the death of the son of our life-long friends. No Rush will have an extended stay in Elizabeth City without us.

June 2nd Update:

We have travelled another 262 miles for a total of 941.

This week we actually took some time to sightsee in Beaufort and Charleston and are taking a break from travelling for a day near Myrtle Beach to catch our breath (and do some laundry). I really enjoyed Beaufort and the docent at the history museum was great.

We have used our first mooring ball and have finally used the dinghy TWICE. All went well.

There are these pretty big fish (3 feet?) that jump straight up out of the water, then fall back in on their tails. It is difficult to Google for more information with that description.

We have had challenging anchor spots, but two nights ago the spot we picked was perfect. There was only a 2-foot tide swing, little breeze, few boats, and you only heard the tree frogs in the background.

Our bird watching has changed from pelicans to terns diving for fish and the number of Osprey are amazing.

The world seems small at times. We have met another couple doing the loop and they have a place on Lake Winnepesaukee, NH where he has been going since he was a child, just like I have. Also, a bartender we met in Charleston was from NY State and he used to wrestle against Hilton High School where Lianne and Ray went to school.

May 27 Update

This week we again travelled 340 miles for a total of 680. We have left Florida behind and have made it to Georgia.

This past week we were 20 miles from the space center for our second rocket launch of the trip, again there were clouds, but this time we were close enough to hear the rumble of the engines which we started hearing about 4 minutes after the launch. So cool!

As we passed the space center, we not only got to see the VAB on the east side, but an airshow entertained us on the west side of the ICW ... parachute jumpers with trails of red smoke, a plane doing aerobatics and two jets that even gave us a fly-by!

We have visited with our first family along the route. Thank you to Mitch's cousin, Kaleigha, for changing her plans on short notice to see us in Jacksonville. It was great to see Kaleigh and meet her son Zander.

We have met some fellow loopers!

Docking has been challenging with tides, wind, currents, and placement of other boats, but Mitch has handled it all with calm whereas I still get a bit crazy.

We are doing well with the mechanics of anchoring, but we need to work on the site selection and our choosing what weather app to believe. We have also gotten through our first storm at anchor. I was glued to my anchor alert app which one day I hope to remember to turn off before we pull up the anchor and leave. We leave to the anchor dragging alarm sounding each time.

Okay, so this was news to me; at night in some sub-tropical areas, you can hear clicking of shrimp beneath the hull. The first night I only heard it in the engine area and thought the engine had gotten over heated and was now cooling down. After a couple of days of worrying and a dockage where you could even hear the crackling from the dock, an internet search resulted in describing how this particular type of shrimp close their claws so quickly that an air bubble forms then bursts and sounds like a pop or crackle. It is the strangest sound....

Ann & Mitch
“No Rush”