

# Captain's Blog

October

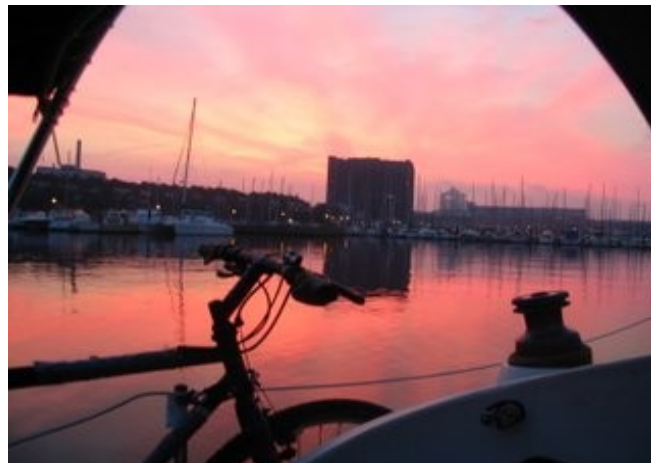
Day :-14 Lat: 9.28 Lon:-76.59



Thursday, October 18, 2007

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Day:-13 Lat:39.28 Lon:-76.58



Got my gps working again. It was crashing my new laptop. Not sure what the problem was. I added a kludge to my program so that it reads from the serial port every quarter second, instead of continuously. I doubt that the solution will work on other computers I plug it into. Now to do some programming so that my position is relayed to [NautiG](#) and displayed on the map online.

Did an [online safety quiz](#) on the Coast Guard website. I am not in compliance and am heading off to the store to get some required items. I was going to take the boat out this morning and work on the autopilot. I'm going to hold off on that. I don't want to risk getting stopped by the Coast Guard until I'm in compliance.

**Friday, October 19, 2007**

[Amy](#) said...

That's a pretty picture.

**Day:-12 Lat:39.28 Lon:-76.58**



A strong gale blew through last night. It blew me across my anchorage. I was cursing my choice of anchorage. It's a spot I pass every morning when I go for a run. I've never seen boats anchored here, but thought it looked like a great spot. Boats are always at another anchorage about a quarter mile away, by the Safeway.

Anyway, I motored to the windward side of the anchorage and tied up to a deserted pier at a new marina and condos. When I weighed anchor this morning, there was no anchor to weigh. The picture is of the anchor earlier in the day when I dredged up an oyster from the harbor. Wish I had gotten the connection to the chain in the picture, so I could see the weak link, but I was focusing in on the oyster.

If it wasn't from the Baltimore harbor, I would have eaten it. I wouldn't swim in this water, let alone eat anything that came out of it.

**Saturday, October 20, 2007**

Amy said...

Good thing you have that spare anchor!  
You do have a spare anchor, right?

Split Decision said...

Now I don't. Bill had offered me one a few weeks ago, but I was all stocked up and told him I didn't need one. Just talked to him, and I can choose among the three he has for a spare.

### Day -11 Ashore



My Dad and I replaced two rotted plywood panels on the barn. Actually, I'm thinking that I did most of the work while he disappeared to lowes to get a post we also found needed to be replaced. Also, installed a new gas tank in my 67 sunbeam alpine convertible. The old one was rusted and started leaking.

**Sunday, October 21, 2007**

Grampa said...

In truth, he did do most of the work. But I'm the guy who bought the new gas tank. Barn painted now. He did take a day off from preparing for his trip south when there is much left to do, so my hat is off to him.

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This is the guy in the slip next to me. He's pretty quiet. I power-washed my boat yesterday. It looks a lot better. Even nicer than this guy's boat.

The guy in the slip on my port side isn't as quiet as the other guy. He has two dogs. But he's a nice guy. He's been giving me electricity. I bought him a case of natural light. That's the swill he drinks. I'll get him a bottle of absolut before I leave.

**Monday, October 22, 2007**

**Day -9 Lat:39.15 Lon:-76.50**



This is an Autohelm 3000 autopilot disassembled. The controller on mine does not work :( I checked all the wires and cleaned the connections. I checked that the compass moves freely. I'm not an electrical engineer, so I'm not competent to diagnose problems on the circuit board level. I'll fiddle with it some more on my way back to the marina.

Spent the night at white rocks. I'd post pictures of the beautiful sunset and sunrise, but if I post that type of picture too often, I think they will get old quick.

**Tuesday, October 23, 2007**

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### **Hospital Ship USNS Comfort**



[Baltimore Sun story](#)

**Wednesday, October 24, 2007**

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## [Chinatown Bus](#)



The Chinatown bus is a great way to get to NYC, which is where I am now. It costs \$20 one way from DC or Baltimore. It's cheaper than driving, and you don't have to pay for parking once you are here. There are lots of companies which provide service and depending on the day, buses leave almost every hour. You can find schedules and buy tickets at [gotobus.com](http://gotobus.com) (although you can also buy tickets on the bus).

Eastern is the most reputable company, with the best service and newest, cleanest buses. The only problem is that most people who ride the buses seem to know that, and Eastern buses are often crowded. I've not been able to get on the bus because it was full with people who had already bought tickets. Other companies' buses are often older, dirtier and emptier. And there can be some surprises, like stopping in Philadelphia or Wilmington along the way. Despite the name, most Chinatown buses will drop you off in midtown Manhattan.

**Thursday, October 25, 2007**

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**Day:-6 Lat:40.78 Lon:-73.92**



When I'm in NY I go running in a park by Hell's Gate. Hell's Gate is so named because the tides run very fast through this area and there are a lot of old shipwrecks. If you're in an underpowered boat going against the tide, you aren't going anywhere but backwards. If you're running with a fast tide, you risk getting slammed into the rocks. I went through Hell's Gate several years ago when I helped a friend move his boat from Baltimore to Connecticut. We left Manhattan early in the morning to hit the gate at the time known as slack tide. It's the time when the tide is at it's lowest or highest point and the water is running neither in nor out.

I bought a [microcontroller](#) this morning. I'm creating a Rube Goldberg fix for my autopilot. I was going to buy a new autopilot, but they are very [expensive](#). Anyone who knows me, knows that I am going to make every effort to get the old autopilot working before I drop a grand on a new one. I'm having fun getting the micro-controller and circuits working. I haven't done anything like this since I was a kid and I got a heathkit electronics kit for Christmas. I built all kinds of neat things with it, like a radio and microphone, siren and other crap. But there was no cpu included in the kit. It was back in the days when hobbyists were just starting to build crude pcs.

I guess the tinkering is in my genes. The only tv in our house until I was 10 or so, was a heathkit tv assembled by my dad. It sat in a plywood box enclosure and you could see all the circuits and the cathode ray tube sticking out the back.

**Friday, October 26, 2007**

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## [NautiG](#)



If you go to [NautiG](#), you can see the route I took from White Rocks to the Marina, before coming up to NY. Push the track menu button. The coordinates were taken from my gps and plotted on the map by the program. I hope to make the program more sophisticated so that it will show my speed and perhaps some other data as well, as I go down the icw starting next week.

**Saturday, October 27, 2007**

[Grampa](#) said...

Neat feature. Tried to use the distance feature on your nautig site, but it's not immediately obvious how to do that. User's manual?

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## Chinatown



Sunday, October 28, 2007

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## Manatee



The manatee is a much maligned and misunderstood creature. Manatees are frequently wounded by boat propellers. Their population in Florida is threatened by extinction due to human activity. To learn how you can help save the manatee, [click here](#).

**Monday, October 29, 2007**

[Amy](#) said...

Make sure you keep manatee well-being in mind as you head down the ICW...

[Grampa](#) said...

I'm pretty sure they are only on the west coast of Florida.

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### **Day -2**



It's getting cold. Time to go.

**Tuesday, October 30, 2007**

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## **Day: -1 Ignition!**



Arrgh, matey! Saw this pirate ship on my run this morning. Had what was probably my last shave and hot shower for two months this morning and left the marina for good an hour ago. Anchored off Fells Point. I have a bunch of loose ends to tie up at the house tomorrow, and then finally heading out.

**Wednesday, October 31, 2007**

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