

September 2003 Cruise  
Part 1: Round Pond to Tenants Harbor

Tom Graefe

Photos by Tom Graefe except where noted.

Cruises may travel over water, but they are adventures of the imagination and spirit. From August 30 to September 5, Dick Harrington and I cruised Muscongus Bay and Penobscot Bay in his Wayfarer, Blue Mist. This, my first cruise, started as a glimmer of an idea when searching for the right sailboat to buy in the summer of 2000. I read of the many cruises taken by Wayfarers, including Dick. After I met Dick, and we sailed together at several NA cruise rallies, it finally took form in an email exchanged as part of the planning for the 2003 Button Bay Cruise rally. A few words exploring dates and plans, and thus began another Wayfarer story—we happen to be the two people Blue Mist carried, but we were sailing in company with other cruises and adventures. One of our encounters during our cruise reminded me of this.

About half way through our cruise we were on a very enjoyable broad reach in 10-12 knot winds up St. George river on the east side of Muscongus Bay. St. George river is not as grand as the Penobscot or Kennebec, but it is a pretty river, which we had reached mid afternoon after sailing down the west side of Penobscot Bay, rounding inside of Mosquito Island, past Port Clyde. The sun was out, and as we tried to find a lobster pound to buy lobsters to cook in the Blue Mist galley, we saw two lovely sails to port sailing along the western shore of the river. I looked at them with binoculars, and Dick and I speculated if they were Herreshoff 12 1/2s. Several minutes later one of the two sails detached itself from the shore and headed out towards us. Soon enough the 12 1/2 came within hailing distance and the solo sailor, an older gentlemen, hollered to us, "That's a Wayfarer isn't it?" We replied affirmatively, to which he responded, "I love those boats! I had one of those 25 years ago. I bought it from Ian Porter." More acknowledgements from us, and then "You know they sail those boats across the North Sea". And again "I loved that boat...I wrote an article about a cruise I did with my son on the Chesapeake". Meanwhile we admired the lovely varnished woodwork of his 12 1/2, and heard once again from the captain, "I really loved that boat". Dick tried to ask for information about the coves we were considering for the night, but the fellow was lost in his reverie, and seemed not quite able to take in the present circumstance of two people cruising a Wayfarer in his home waters. We finally parted ways, as we continued on looking for a lobster pound and our cove for the night--though he had invited us to spend the night at his house.

As with many adventures, they actually begin before your first step or mile sailed with preparation and planning. Since Dick had the responsibility of organizing Blue Mist, as well as driving from Euclid, Ohio to my house in Norwell, Massachusetts, south of Boston, I made up meal and food lists and did a lot of the shopping, along with organizing my personal gear. Dick and I had conferred about the broad parameters of the week's logistics, and to this I added many years of backpacking experience. A Wayfarer can hold quite a bit of gear, and though we were careful not to be extravagant, fresh peaches and apples from Ohio, along with bagels, and delicious apple-walnut bread were a few of the things I'd never consider lugging on my back, but fit fine on Blue Mist. Of course, backpacking never afforded opportunities for just-harvested lobster, or the delicious venison Dick brought for our first dinner. All the planning was done remotely via email, and in fact Dick was in Scandinavia for most of the month leading up to the cruise. The best advice about

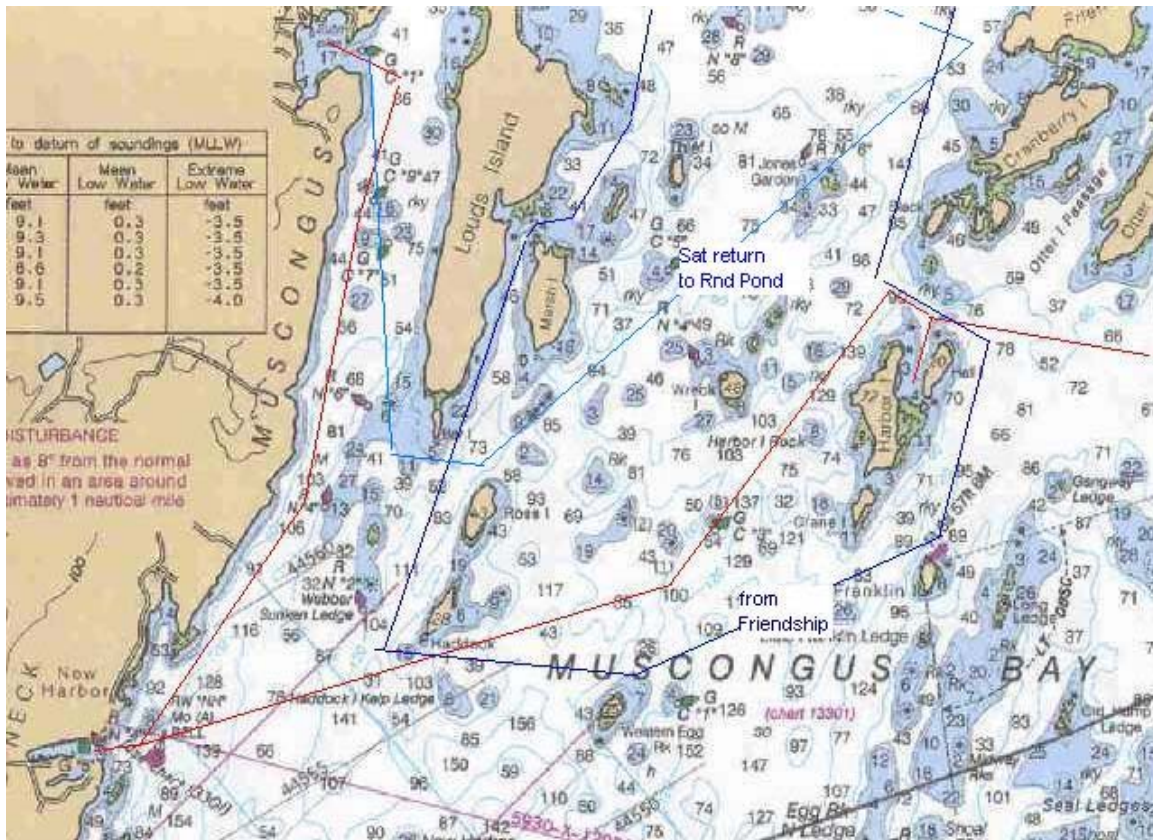
planning was to have the basics all covered, but to make sure to allow room for spontaneity. As Dick said, "You don't want to turn down an opportunity for something really good, just because you have already bought all your meals." I found this philosophy extended beyond cooking to the cruise overall. We had the chance to put ourselves in some of the world's most beautiful cruising grounds, and allowing ourselves the freedom to make spur of the moment decisions and take advantage of what the weather gave us, made our time all the more enjoyable and different from so much of the programmed regimen of daily work life.

The planning we did came together very well, and Dick made it to Norwell in good time, even with the Labor Day traffic. We got off to an early start on Saturday, the 30<sup>th</sup>, and headed up the coast to Round Pond, a launching site Dick has used successfully in the past. As a local farmer told us when we stopped to buy some vegetables, "it's got the best launching ramp around here". His green beans and zucchini were pretty good too. Round Pond is a very well protected harbor on the east side of Pemaquid Neck, and has a mix of working lobster boats and pleasure craft. Near the public ramp and dock are several lobster pounds and restaurants, but otherwise it's a pretty quiet spot, even on Labor Day weekend. As we packed Blue Mist with all our gear, one fellow inquired if we were there for the Labor Day Regatta, to which we replied, "not exactly, since we were getting ready for a week cruise." Later as we sailed on our first leg of the cruise onto Muscongus Bay, we saw a cluster of 30 footers returning, the likely leading group, and chuckled about including Blue Mist in that crowd.



Our destination for Saturday evening was Harbor Island, which is in the middle of Muscongus Bay. But since we had gotten away in early afternoon and the conditions

were good, we decided to visit New Harbor, which is south of Round Pond on Pemaquid Neck and then head east to Harbor Island. The sail to New Harbor got us out onto more open ocean water since we left the passage between the mainland and Louds Island behind. Here we encountered 4-5 foot swells, and about a 10-15 knot wind, under partly cloudy skies. After tacking up into New Harbor, we headed back out and across Muscongus Bay to Harbor Island, about 5 miles north east. We had a fun reach across. The breeze freshened a bit, shifted closer to our destination and clouds thickened as we beat the last stretch. As we headed down into the anchorage between Harbor and Hall Islands the wind picked up some more, and blew a chop right down on us between the two islands. Thank goodness for the 11 lb Bruce anchor and the boom tent as dodger—as well as fleece and wind breakers, as we settled in for the evening.



It was a fine evening. The wind remained steady, and as the clouds slowly lifted, the north wind ushered in the high pressure system that was make for wonderfully clear night and next day. After our anchor dram—a custom Dick brought back from his Scandinavian cruise with Ken Jensen--we put together a meal of boiled potatoes, sautéed onions and gravy, and incredible delicious and tender pan fried venison chops. As with nearly every activity on a 16 foot boat, whether you are conscious of it or not, it was a cooperative exercise, this time of single burner cooking and pan juggling. I felt the wind clearing away anxieties and worries, the sound of the water on the hull and the motion of the boat immersing me in the moment as the perfect backdrop for enjoying the food and companionship. While some might have considered it a bit of an active anchorage, if anything it made the night all the better. We finished dinner and enjoyed a wonderful sunset, followed later by the full

panorama of stars in the clear sky, dominated by an infinite Milky Way such as I had not seen in a long time.



Managing the transition of activities 24 hours a day on a Wayfarer takes a system. It is not too complicated, but there are a lot of subtle improvisations that need to work all the time in good weather or bad, day light or dark. Having a reasonable system that has been practically tested—user tested as I would say at work—and found to be user-friendly and useful—is a big part of making a cruise work. Dick has Blue Mist set up to accommodate the three main phases to each day: sailing, dinner/breakfast time, and night time. Sailing is just about all the time except when anchored or moored for the night. When sailing we had handy anything we might need as the weather changed, or we might want should we heave-to for lunch or stop for a walk. This is active sailing mode. Dinner/Breakfast usually meant the boom tent was partially rigged over the forward section of the boat and the galley was ready. We could get all we needed for relaxing and cooking from the rear buoyancy compartment, or retrieved from storage stowed next to, but not inside, the bow compartment. So after anchoring we cleared the decks from sailing, got into whatever was comfortable for the weather (hoping it's not raining!), and thought about dinner. Cooking worked quite well with a boat cushion to lean back on against the thwart or to sit on, with stove towards the rear. Water (even it is always salty) was only an arm's reach away to rinse our fingers. We often enjoyed a leisurely dinner right into darkness, lit a lantern for clean up and then got the boat ready for the night. The sleeping bags and pads were stowed in the forward compartment, which meant a regular process of shifting gear out of the way, retrieving sleeping stuff, and then shifting it back and off the deck to make room for us to stretch out. I'm sure anyone that has cruised in a Wayfarer has their own system, which

resembles this one more or less given the preferences or idiosyncrasies of the owner or their predecessors. As this was my first cruise on Blue Mist, part of the pleasure and education was absorbing these practical details as they became routine, and developing the team work that made life aboard go smoothly and efficiently.

We woke to a clear blue sky and the sight of the islands around us and thousands of lobster pot buoys bobbing in the calm water looking north toward the islands between us and Port Clyde. I was fascinated by the myriad of colored buoys as far as the eye could see, all standing out brightly in the bright morning sunlight. This Sunday was the quietest morning of the trip, since there were no lobster men out raising their traps. After breakfast and stowing the gear we decided to take a walk on Hall Island and go for a swim. We raised the anchor and rowed leisurely towards the shore, we then anchored again and ran a stern line to shore to hold us clear as the tide continued to go out. The water was cold but refreshing, and from the shore we enjoyed views of Franklin Light and other islands. About the time we were ready to go the wind came up and we sailed for Port Clyde, which we planned as a mid-day stop on our way to Tenants Harbor and Long Cove.





The sail to Port Clyde was an easy broad reach and run under the warm sun, until the channel to the harbor, when we had to dodge various boats (sail and otherwise) mostly motoring out of the harbor. We saw a gorgeous R-boat tacking out smartly, and what a pretty sight she was. These boats have a history dating back to the 20's and the famous 'Pirate' has been focus of restoration efforts in Seattle.



Port Clyde turned out to be a quick stop for coffee and a break, and our only somewhat terse run-in with local float enforcement officials. Leaving Port Clyde we sailed out and around Mosquito Island, where once clear we heaved-to for lunch, before proceeding on to Tenants Harbor.



photo by Dick Harrington

Tenant's Harbor provided several prototypical ingredients for an interesting stop. The entrance to the Harbor is marked with a restored (but no longer functioning) lighthouse.



It is a working harbor but does have quite a few pleasure craft, some of which are clearly well-maintained or restored older wood boats. There is a great seafood restaurant called the 'Cod End' with its own float (just next to the town float). We sailed in with a view of green hills bordering the harbor, set against the blue sky and water, lit by the late afternoon sun. We docked at the Cod End float. After organizing Blue Mist and shifting to our shore clothes we enjoyed an anchor dram (liberal interpretation of anchor, but it was the right time of day) while watching several other sail boats arrive or sail past. One small boat we had seen at a distance sailing inshore near the harbor entrance came by. It was a small dory with rust red sails in a gaff rig and small jib being single handed in the somewhat gusty and shifty harbor winds. A forest green Thistle with its large main sail and signature thistle came up to the Cod End float, missed the timing a hair, backed the main to get some room and then came again. The crew were young folks, in shorts, fleece shell jackets and fleece hats, and they looked like they had had a full day. They ultimately headed to the town dock, as they were taking out and the town ramp was adjacent. After they departed a much larger yacht motored in for gas, water and dinner. Though the Blue Mist was well out of the way, as she was tucked at the shore end of the float, as the skipper of the yacht motored in and revved the engine to position the stern nearer to the float, I thought for sure Dick was going to receive the belch of exhaust-driven water from the exhaust pipe that was pointed right at the side of Blue mist where he was sitting. The crew comprised an older gentleman and his wife, decked in khakis, sport shirts, and neat sweaters, groomed and tidy, and one step up from LL Bean. The Captain got the boat into place, while the crew worked to get the lines rigged satisfactorily. Few words passed between them, and those that did were in low grumbles, as the captain readjusted the spring lines. They filled their tanks and then headed up to dinner. We followed them up the dock ashore for a walk and then food.

After a delicious seafood plate, I walked to the general store to call my family and let them know I was alive and well. Just as I finished my call, a Saab drove up towing the Thistle. The woman who had been crewing went into the store for food, while the fellow waited in the car. I had seen a Thistle quite like the one on the trailer last summer, just coming into the beach in Hingham Harbor, near Boston, where I often day sail. Thinking there could not be that many restored green Thistles, I asked the driver if he had ever sailed out of Hingham. He replied, that he had, because he usually keeps his boat at his parent's house, which is in Hingham. We talked about the Thistle (He wants to put some reefing points in the main, and had found the wind on the bay a handful) and he asked about the dinghy he had seen me sitting on at the float, so I told him a bit about Blue Mist and Wayfarers in general. As we parted he gave me a water-stained card business card (Babson class of 2002, MBA) and we agreed to try to meet in Hingham for a sail this fall.

As the sun went down on a fine and fun evening, we sailed around the corner into Long Cove, through the outer portion of the cove and found a snug, well protected spot for the night. It was not our most picturesque anchorage, but very convenient from Tenants Harbor, with direct access to Muscle Ridge Channel, our course the next morning.