



WAYPOINTS

ON DECK: Becoming Cruisers :: Making a Purchase Decision :: Tom's World :: First Annual Photo Contest

Becoming Cruisers, Step by Step

by Chuck and Barb Shipley, *Tusen Takk II*, Krogen 48' North Sea

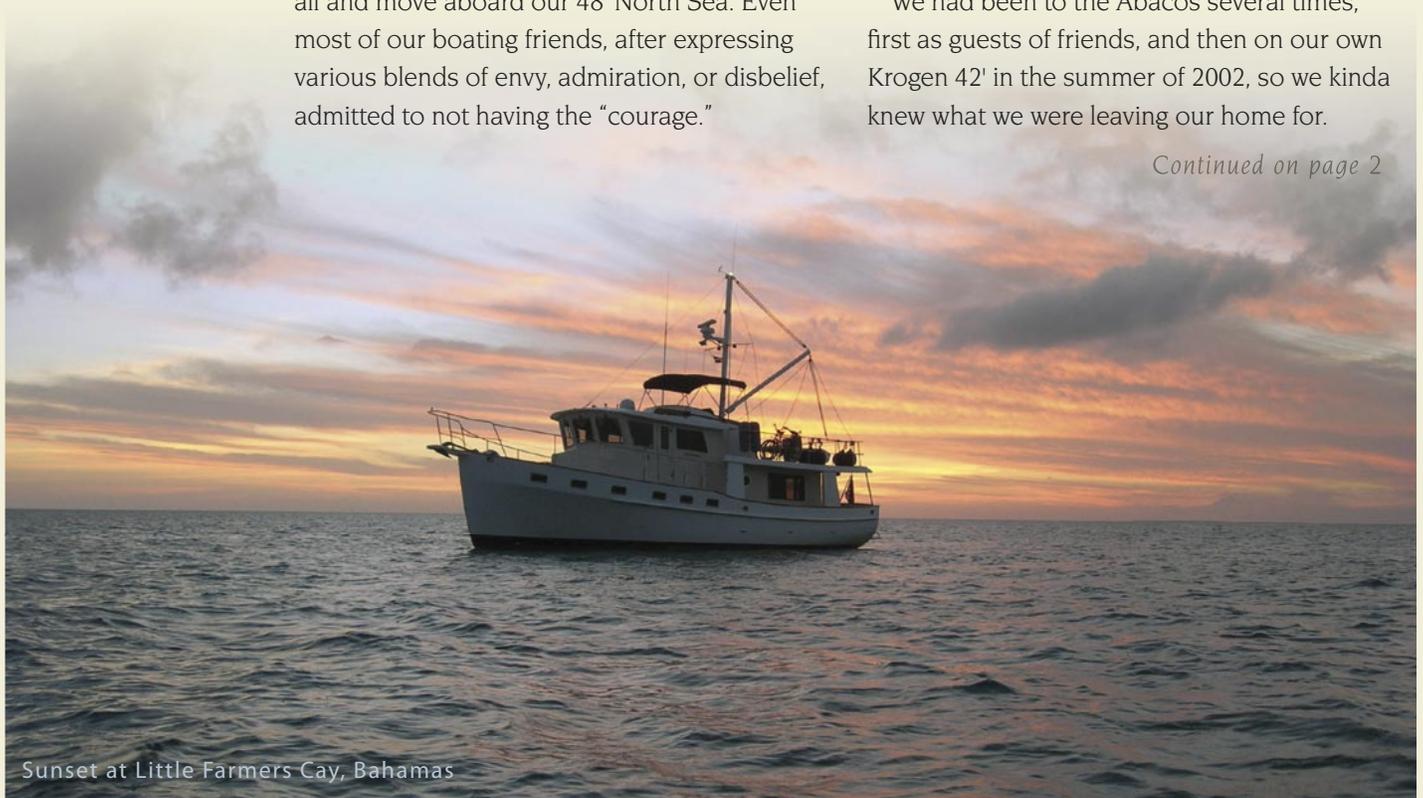
Barb and I each grew up on farms in the Dakotas. We met and married in Savannah, Georgia. We retired in July 2005, sold our cars and our lovely deep-water Savannah home with its gorgeous dock in the back yard, and moved aboard Tusen Takk II, a Krogen 48' North Sea. There have been those who found our transition from under the rattling cottonwoods of the Great Plains to the moss-burdened live oaks of the Deep South both surprising and improbable. How much more so, our recent transition to mangroves and casuarina! We share here some excerpts from our blog, www.tusentakk2.com, recounting our first months aboard.

Out here, in the southern Bahamas, where almost all of our anchorage-mates have done roughly the same thing, it is hard to remember the degree of amazement our friends and family registered when they learned of our plans to sell all and move aboard our 48' North Sea. Even most of our boating friends, after expressing various blends of envy, admiration, or disbelief, admitted to not having the "courage."

So, how did a couple of farm kids find their way to this lifestyle, and how is it working out? The short answers are, respectively, "One step at a time," and, after eight months and over 4100 nautical miles, "Just great, thank you."

We had been to the Abacos several times, first as guests of friends, and then on our own Krogen 42' in the summer of 2002, so we kinda knew what we were leaving our home for.

Continued on page 2



Sunset at Little Farmers Cay, Bahamas



Tusen Takk II rests in Stampers Bay near Berkeley Island, Virginia.

“So we began looking for the right vessel, and were absolutely bowled over by the 48' North Sea.”

Continued from page 1

As retirement loomed closer, we came to realize that we really wanted to cruise extensively. So we began looking for the right vessel, and were absolutely bowled over by the 48' North Sea. We like the way she handles the seas; we appreciate the extra safety gained by cruising a vessel that is designed to take more punishment than we ourselves want to endure. We love the layout, the quality of the workmanship both inside and out, and the enormous amount of storage space on board. And more subjectively, we just love the way she looks.

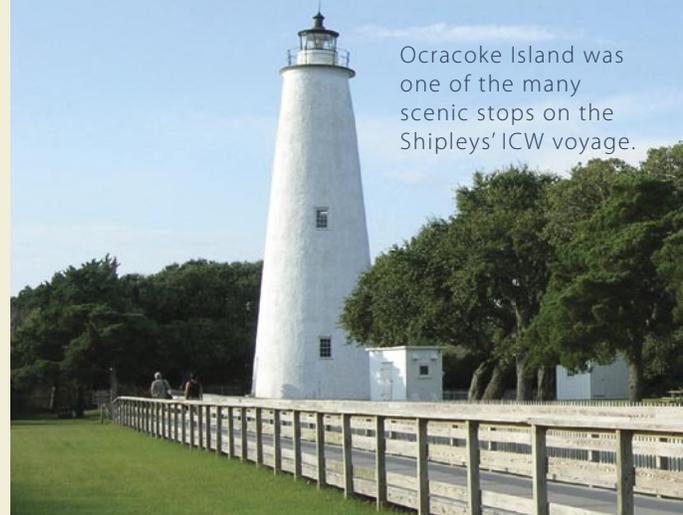
Were we apprehensive about our new venture? Not really. Prudence (and our insurance company) dictated that we head north along the Intracoastal Waterway, rather than setting out directly to the Caribbean, since hurricane season was upon us. The ICW above Charleston, SC, was all new territory to us, and we chose to traverse to the Chesapeake exclusively on the inside, so our transition was gradual. Of course, Murphy's Law saw that we gained some valuable experience. We learned the exhilaration of waking to a violent thunderstorm and realizing that our vessel was dragging toward that of our companions; we learned that we could handle the crisis without permanent damage to our relationship; we learned that we could indeed reset the anchor in the wind and rain. (And we learned that we should install a larger anchor.) I had early opportunities to refresh my skills at changing the impellers on the propulsion engine and the genset. I learned that simultaneous “crazy” readings of oil pressure and temperature and

voltage do not signal Armageddon, but rather the need to tighten a grounding bolt on an engine block.

Our transition to living aboard had been hectic, given we seriously downsized from our house to the boat. We were glad for the stateside chance to learn which clothes, galley utensils, supplies and tools we really needed.

Preparations for Departure July 1, 2005

The last two weeks before we departed were hell. We previously focused on giving the kids the good furniture, selling the sellable at a series of moving sales, giving the givable to Goodwill, and junking the rest, but we still had an enormous volume of stuff that we thought we wanted to take with us. So we had carried that all down to the dock, where it awaited loading onto the boat. We both labored until 3:30 A.M. June 30-July 1 putting it all aboard, and then collapsed for a few precious hours before getting up to drive into Savannah for the house closing. When we arrived back in the driveway, a buyer was waiting to purchase our car—the last



Ocracoke Island was one of the many scenic stops on the Shipley's ICW voyage.

of our disposables. Talk about last minute!
We spent hours that afternoon securing the items that had been thrown aboard the night before, and putting the kayaks and bicycles on board. It was 5:30 P.M. by the time we left our dock. No longer “our” dock, really. We were tired. We were relieved. We went all of seven miles before anchoring on the Ogeechee River, not quite to Marker 98, and not quite to the Intracoastal Waterway, but definitely on our way to a whole new life!

After sleeping like the dead on our first night on the hook, we had a leisurely breakfast and headed north. We met up with friends on their Krogen 39' and anchored near Daufuskie Island, southwest of Hilton Head, SC. They treated us to an on-board leg of lamb dinner followed by a champagne toast to celebrate our new life. Excellent! The next day we all got our kayaks down and went for a long paddle in the nearby creeks.

(The above underscores one of the salient features of living aboard a Krogen: the fellowship with other Krogen owners. Already we have made many deep friendships. We've met and re-encountered a number of couples, and have cruised with one or more other Krogens. But not just Krogenites. Generally, cruising means meeting interesting people.)

Onward to the Chesapeake

Cruising up the ICW was fun. We enjoyed seeing the changes in the landscape and geography. Just north of Charleston, SC, the terrain changed almost immediately from the meandering tidal creeks that we had learned to love so much in Georgia, to be replaced by straighter man-made channels. That feature persisted all the way up to Southport, NC. What did change during this stretch, however, were the flora and the population density.

North of Georgetown, SC, the ICW begins to angle off inland, and so the water gets less and less salty and more and more tannin-stained. Cypress trees and knees line the shores. Eventually the ICW angles back toward the sea. Approaching Myrtle Beach the ICW



Chuck paddles among rock formations in the Berry Islands.

morphs again, still tannin-stained, but now the narrower straight channels have been cut down to bedrock. Kinda scary, because the narrow passage with hard shoulders makes passing or meeting large vessels very problematical. You can read about our ports of call and anchorages from Georgia up to Virginia at www.tusentakk2.com.

After 45 days of cruising, Chuck put the following in our log. Question: How do you spend your time when you are not actually traveling with the boat? Answer: Futzing, mostly. A little varnishing here. A little stainless steel polishing there. A little bottom cleaning. A little hull washing and waxing. Installing small improvements, like new hooks for hanging towels or new trumpet horns on the flybridge or adjusting the chart-reading light in the pilot-house. Reading one of the many systems manuals on board. Changing oil and filters. Cleaning through-hull filters. Changing zincs. But not always futzing. Sometimes, more actively recreating: tours, walks, runs, kayak explorations, and happy hours on board. I've read much less than I thought I would. Not enough time! But that will surely settle down as I spend less time “improving” and far less time

“One of the salient features of living aboard a Krogen: the fellowship with other Krogen owners.”

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

re-arranging all that we brought aboard—stuff that needed a home but hadn't yet been assigned a place. The guest stateroom is now nearly clear enough to receive a guest!

Excerpts from the Chesapeake

We departed Regatta Point Marina, Deltaville, VA, back out the Rappahannock River to the Chesapeake for a short jaunt down to the Piankatank River. Seven miles up the Piankatank we found paradise, September 3. We anchored off Berkeley Island, and didn't leave for a week! What did we do at one isolated anchorage for a whole week? Well, Chuck got in two long runs and two five-mile runs. We put down many coats of varnish on the cap rail. Barb took her bike nine miles back to Deltaville to pick up a new receiver box for our weather system, and later another ride to send the defective ones back, and later to get a haircut, buy vegetables, and secure a few varnishing supplies.

On a Sunday just as we were about to sit down for breakfast, a center console runabout suddenly appeared at our stern. There were two men on board. One held a manila envelope. Were we about to be served with some kind of papers?

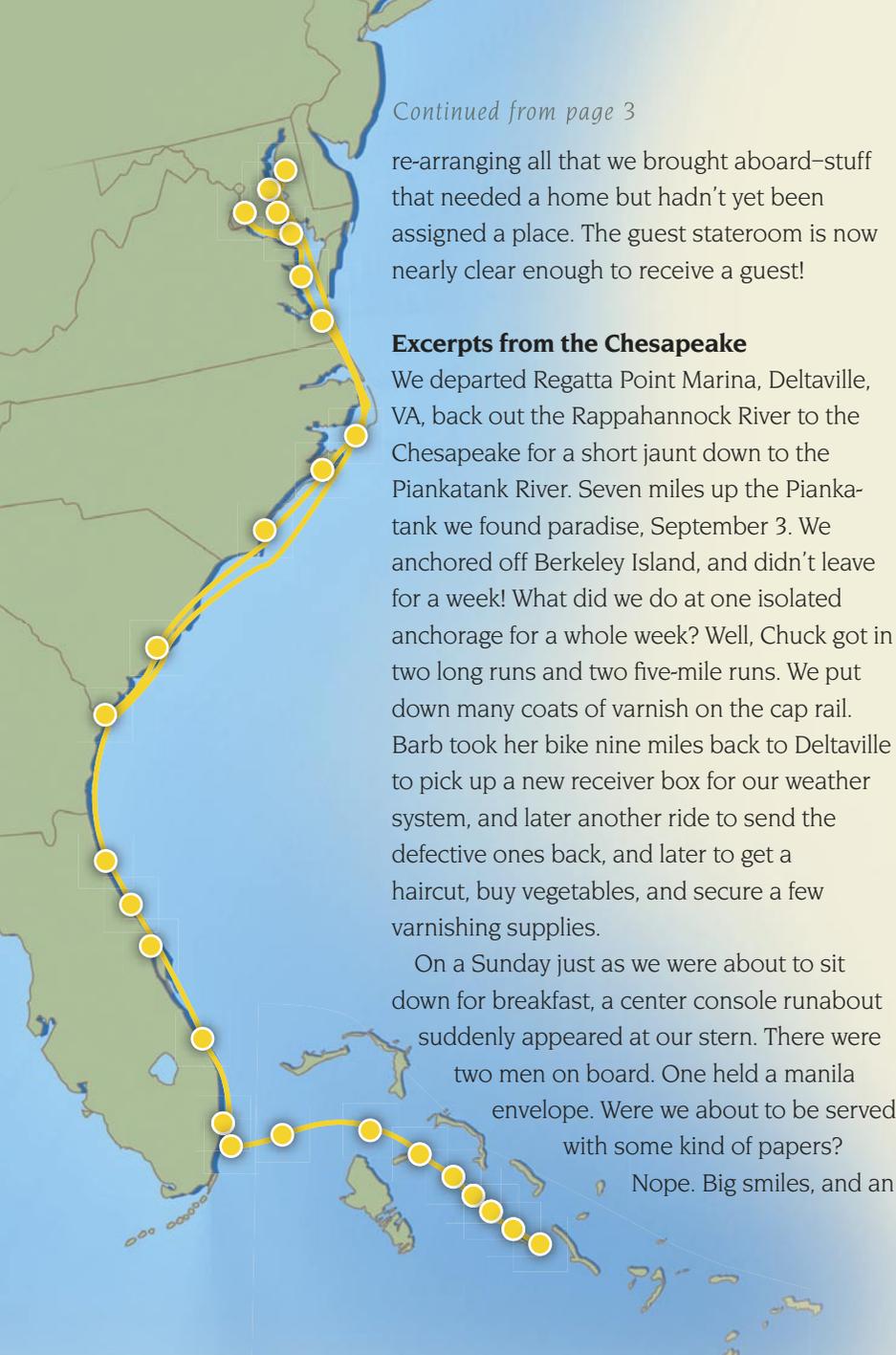
Nope. Big smiles, and an

explanation: they had been admiring our boat; had taken some pictures; were presenting a print of one of the pictures as a gift, and a CD with several others! How nice!

After our Krogen cruising companions left the anchorage on Labor Day, we had the glorious bay pretty much to ourselves for awhile. Eventually another vessel appeared. Interesting looking. We dropped by during a dinghy run to the public landing and learned that Ned, the single-handing skipper, had designed and built the steel-hulled vessel some 26 years ago in Ohio, and had been living on her ever since. He has taken the vessel up the Tombigbee, up and down the east coast many times, and down through the Bahamas and Caribbean as far as the Dominican Republic. Interesting fellow.

We pumped him for recommendations of anchorages off the Chesapeake, and learned that he had been on the first leg of the Great Loop (in the conventional counter-clockwise direction—up the east coast, through the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi) when a hurricane got in the way, and he had to duck into one of the Chesapeake's many hidey-holes. That was the genesis of a new quest: to visit every one of the Chesapeake's many side rivers. At the time we spoke, he had only three left.

One day as Barb waited at the public landing for me to come get her and her bike, she spoke with two couples who had brought a sailboat down from New Jersey. As they were trailering the boat, they excitedly told of seeing bald eagles and their nest on Berkeley Island. A couple days later, we loaded onto the dinghy for some serious bird watching. This was Barb's first real experience with her brand-spanking-new image-stabilized 10x30 Canon beauties, and so she was even more eager than I to spy the eagles. It can be safely concluded that our New Jersey sailors were city slickers. We didn't see any bald eagles, but we did see several osprey. Ospreys do have a certain



Barb Shipley at Sugar Beach Cave



Got lobster?



in the Berry Islands

amount of white on their heads. (But also a black mask, as well as other black areas.) The eagle nest turned out to be a large duck blind! We could hardly stifle the giggles sufficient-ly to steer the dinghy back to our boat.

October 10, 2005:

Anchored near Warehouse Point on the Indian Creek, on the north end of Fleets Bay, VA, just north of the Rappahannock. The trip had been blustery, making the absolute stillness of the picturesque anchorage all the more memorable. We sat in the warmth on the foredeck with a drink until the sun sank. Wow, it got chilly quickly. But not so quickly that we missed the sights and sounds of a flock of Canada geese passing just overhead in their ragged forked formation, talking among themselves in resonant, musical and loud but congenial "h-ronk, h-ronk." We felt some reluctance to be soon leaving the beautiful Chesapeake Bay. The wide open waters of the Bay itself; the interesting rivers feeding into it; the charming creeks feeding into the rivers, with so many of the creeks featuring bucolic anchorages—all of this we would soon pass out of, and into the more restricted ICW.

We're in the subtropics now

And so we did. Back down to Savannah for an extended Thanksgiving visit with friends and family, and then on down the ICW to No Name Harbor, just south of Miami, where we awaited a weather window with two other Krogens for the crossing.

We checked in with Bahama customs and immigration on January 12, 2006, and have been enjoying the subtropics ever since. What is so great about the Bahamas? The water! The fishing! The diving! The people, both locals and cruisers! The sky!

Virtually every time we have traversed deep water, we have caught mahi-mahi. We've had some gorgeous snorkeling and scuba diving expeditions. We detoured to the upper Berry Islands while awaiting a weather window to cross the Tongue of the Ocean to Nassau, and discovered a very friendly settlement at Great Harbour: walk or run on the road, and everyone waves as they pass. We've had uncountable congenial Happy Hours with fellow cruisers, sometimes on a vessel and sometimes on a sandy shore after an announcement on the VHF. On several such occasions, when the horizon to the west stretched down to the sea, and there were no clouds, we were privileged to see the green flash! And at night, bright stars all the way down to the horizon. Cruising life is good!

And what about the long run? After this shakedown cruise, we will return to the Northeast for the summer and then cruise to the Caribbean next winter, spending the following summer below the hurricane belt. We think the Krogen 48' North Sea is just about the perfect boat for these plans. Maybe one day we will become jaded, but for now we are still in love: We wish we had a dollar bill for every time we have found ourselves pausing as we dinghied away from her—pausing to look back and say "Damn, that's a pretty boat!"

"What is so great about the Bahamas? The water! The fishing! The diving! The people, both locals and cruisers! The sky!"

