



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON



The Great Loop

DON & SCOTT LEWAND, MARIAH

A love for boats and boating has been passed down in the LeWand family for generations. Don LeWand bonded with his father on boats as a child, and even built a utility-class hydroplane vessel with him with plans purchased from *Mechanix Illustrated*. Don and his dad completed the project and won the magazine's Golden Hammer Award for their work. Don's passion for the water only grew in adulthood. He's enjoyed decades of sailing and more than 20 years cruising aboard several boats, including his former 1979 Krogen 42' trawler. Naturally, Don bonded with his own son, Scott, on the water.

For as long as the two can remember, Don and Scott recall dialing each other every Saturday to talk about their latest projects and plans. A few years ago, their weekly conversations were about their biggest project to-date, the building of their Krogen 52', named *MARIAH*. Both engineers, they built this comfortable and dependable boat for handling adventures—and for the majority of 2018, they had no need for calls, as they were constant companions doing the Great Loop together!

Their relationship inspires us, and we wish them more wonderful days on the water! Scott filled us in on their Great Loop journey and his pointers for others who are aspiring to navigate these connected waterways.



MARIAH, KROGEN 52'



How long has this adventure been on the agenda? What made you both decide the Great Loop was a feat you wanted to tackle?

I grew up with my father sailing the waters of New England from New Jersey to Nantucket every summer in the 70's and 80's. When I went to college in Florida in the 90's, dad sold the sailboat and bought a Kroger 42' and I bought another sailboat and started plying the waters of Florida and the Bahamas. This is when the regular Saturday morning calls started, to compare boat projects, and I seem to think it was my father's first trip up the Hudson River in the late 90's on the 42' that started him talking about the Great Loop. Eventually, he built a house in Florida with his dream dock in the backyard. He retired a few years after that project, and by the end of 2015, *MARIAH* (our Kroger 52') showed up!

We did trips to the Keys and the Bahamas, but we knew something bigger was on the horizon—the Loop, the Mediterranean, or South America were all bantered about by my father. I had interest in all of them but was also still working and he had no committed crew. After Googling about the Loop and learning about the Erie and Trent-Severn Canal systems, I was hooked. Traveling in the States is SO much easier than internationally, and what better experience for our first BIG trip, than to see the United States in a way we had never seen it before. I was closing-in on a significant milestone in my life, my 50th birthday, and decided I was going to retire and do the Loop with my father. It was on his bucket list and it's a once in a lifetime experience—so we did it!

When and where did you start the Great Loop?

For me, our Great Loop adventure began the first week of March 2018. I retired! Exactly one month later, we were departing from Vero Beach, Florida aboard *MARIAH*, heading north and entering the ICW to begin the route that circumnavigates the waterways and locks of the eastern portion of the United States and parts of Canada. It took us a month to go up the East Coast and arrive at our old marina in New Jersey, just outside of New York Harbor. The Erie Canal didn't open until mid-May, so *MARIAH* relaxed for a few weeks. I tied up loose-ends back in Florida and my father hung out with his boat buddies. There are always projects to be done, and this was a great time for us (we're both engineers) to implement some of the new ideas we had to enhance and maintain *MARIAH*.

When did you finish the Great Loop?

In seven-and-a-half months (probably much faster than how most "Loopers" do the Great Loop), we finished what was a truly amazing trip. We were back in Florida before Thanksgiving.

What surprised you the most doing the Great Loop?

What surprised me the most is how easy it was! We have Nobeltec TIMEZERO Navigation Software and Furuno TZtouch Navigation equipment, and everything has been spot-on. The twin screws with bow and stern thrusters makes moving *MARIAH*

the high-pressure raw water wash down worked great to keep her clean.

Do you have a favorite section of the Loop?

What hooked it for me was the engineering of the Trent-Severn Canal system in Ontario, Canada. The Peterborough and Kirkfield Lift Locks are amazing. Add in the Big Chute Marine Railway, and it's just amazing what a society can do to invent technology to solve problems—and these were invented almost 100 years ago! The Canadian people were oh-so-friendly everywhere we stopped. We entered Canada at the port of Trenton and the locals on the dock were giving us strawberries, tomatoes, pea-meal bacon, and other treats to welcome us. It was just amazing!

What was the most beautiful?

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and we certainly saw some beautiful sites in terms of anchorages, crystal clear water in the Great Lakes and Canada, forests, otters, deer, and other wildlife, but remember we are engineers. What was beautiful is how well *MARIAH* and we did as a team. We observed other boats using headsets to allow the captain to communicate with their spouse/crew and we wondered why they needed them. On our boat, the bridge wing control stations are awesome for docking, and communication while docking couldn't be easier. We have developed a synergy that makes docking/anchoring this boat a breeze without the need for headsets.

in tight quarters a dream. And we have a 100-lb SS Spade Anchor that hooks fast every time! There was apprehension about the locks, and I'd say for the first eight locks in the Erie Canal we were a wreck, but then we got in the swing of things and all was good. We signed on a buddy of mine from New Jersey as crew to help transit the Erie Canal to Oswego and it was great having the extra set of hands, but in hindsight, we could have done it without him. I joke that I want to hate this boat; I'm a sailor and have owned a sailboat and have sailed all my life, but *MARIAH* is AWESOME to be on!



What was the most challenging aspect of the Great Loop?

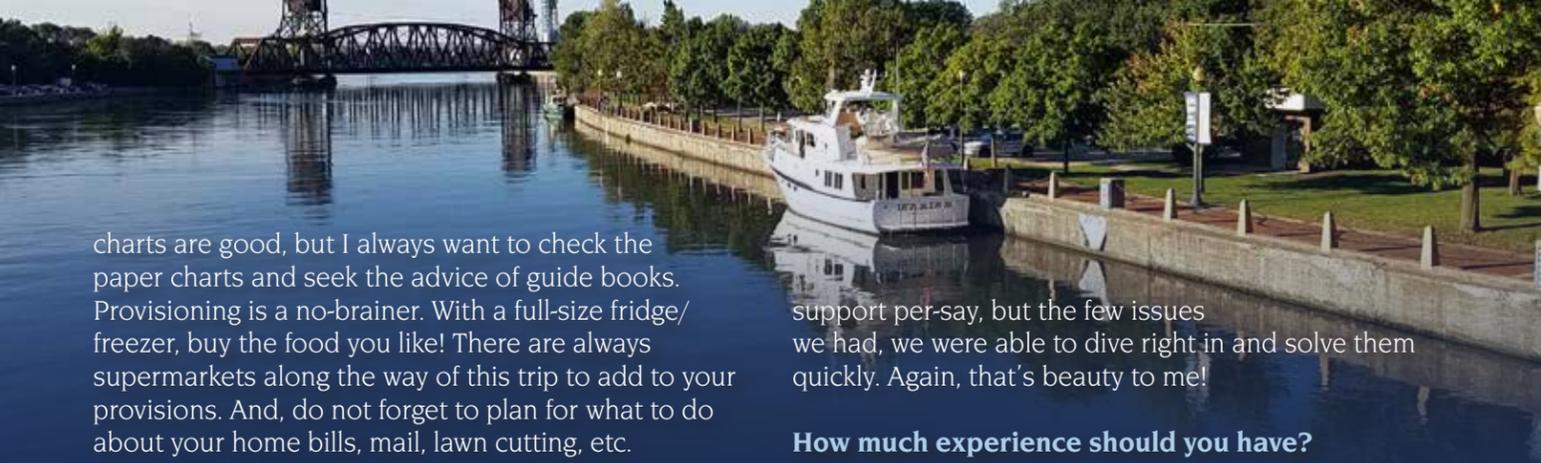
For me, my father's "laissez-faire attitude," while I am a more detailed-oriented person who subscribes to A.B.C. (Always Be Cleaning!) 😊 The raw water wash down on the foredeck was great in the freshwater. We saw a ton of pollen coming up the East Coast that coated the boat every day. Later into Canada, mayflies, midges, spiders, and mosquitos dominated us and covered the boat every night. My morning ritual to use

Mechanically/electronics-wise, we had some challenges, but to me what is beautiful is how easy it was to solve these challenges. Our ABT stabilizer touch screen died and we reached out to ABT by phone and email, referencing the documentation left on board by Kadey-Krogen, and boom they shipped us a replacement display to our next port of call. Hats-off to Gregg Gandy of Kadey-Krogen, because as service manager, he has been a player/coach always willing to help and answer technical questions. *That is beautiful!*

With Kadey-Krogen, you're not just buying a vessel, you are becoming part of a family who provide awesome support and are fun to be with.

What kind of preparation should you do prior to the voyage?

That's so multi-dimensional; obviously, research your route, provision, plan, etc. My father gets kudos for doing that initial route research and ordering paper charts of every waterway we went through. Electronic



charts are good, but I always want to check the paper charts and seek the advice of guide books. Provisioning is a no-brainer. With a full-size fridge/freezer, buy the food you like! There are always supermarkets along the way of this trip to add to your provisions. And, do not forget to plan for what to do about your home bills, mail, lawn cutting, etc.

The one thing we didn't do until our stop in New Jersey, was consider how to get the reliable data we needed for our always-connected world. We initially installed a WaveWifi network range extender that claimed to give you WiFi connectivity up to seven miles from a hotspot, but that did not at all work as advertised. Cellular data plans are the way to go! We opted for an unlimited data plan with AT&T and we could not have been happier with the performance and price.

What should you carry for spare parts and tools?

Another multi-dimensional question that you could take to an extreme either way! With that said, I did command that we investigate what we had in terms of tools and add to our toolset. Mainly to ensure we had a full, complete set of metric and English sockets/wrenches/hex keys/screw drivers/electrical supplies, etc. In fact, a lot of pieces were missing from the initial toolset, and I wanted to make sure we had complete suite. My father did a great job making sure we had spare oil/fuel filters for the engines, AND enough oil to do two complete oil changes. Spare water pumps (or rebuild kits) are a good idea for the propulsion engines, generators, and don't forget about the hydraulic cooling pumps and the HVAC raw water pumps.

You both are engineers, how mechanically inclined should you be?

In my opinion, if you are not mechanically inclined and have to rely on mechanics/electricians/yards for all work, you probably should not own a boat. I've met people who outsource everything and complain when things are not right, working properly, etc. They become slaves to their mechanics and can't do anything themselves. We met one guy who lost an engine in the Erie Canal and paid \$1,200 to have a marine mechanic meet him at the next port to replace...*a fuse!* To me, that's insane. He rafted with us that night and said he would have paid us a couple hundred bucks had he known. *MARIAH* has not needed advanced technical

support per-say, but the few issues we had, we were able to dive right in and solve them quickly. Again, that's beauty to me!

How much experience should you have?

As much as it takes to make you feel comfortable. We are both USCG licensed captains, but that by no means is a requirement. The Krogen 52' is the most amazing boat for comfort, ease of operation, and handling. A novice with six-months-to-a-year of experience with this boat could embark on the same trip with success.

Was MARIAH one of the largest vessels on your route?

In general, for a leisure craft, YES. We saw at least a dozen (probably more) Kadey-Krogens in the canals. There was a riverboat, the Kawartha Voyageur, that passed us in the Trent-Severn canal that was 120', and I recall seeing a mega-yacht from Hobe Sound in Harbor Springs, Michigan, that was probably 75-85'. In the Great Lakes, you'll see ferries and lakers (a type of cargo carrier) that are much larger—but no surprises.

Were there modifications you had to make to your Krogen 52' to make her Loop-able?

Nothing specific to the Loop per-say, we improved things like the drain behind the anchor windlass to better accept mud, shells and debris without overflowing the pedestal and spilling on the deck. When we spec'd out *MARIAH*, we made the mast on the hardtop to be able to be folded back to clear the low bridges on the Erie Canal. That folding mast worked great! Similarly, we spec'd the hardtop over the flybridge to be removable, should we ever need more clearance.

What advice would you give to first-timers regarding transiting locks?

Patience. The first few locks, I felt we were a little slap-happy hitting the bow and stern thrusters too much, which created a see-saw action of the boat against the lock wall. Place your lines, don't touch the controls, and enjoy the ride. Locking down is much easier than locking up.

Did you stay primarily at marinas or did you look to anchor-out?

Along the way, there were many great anchorages, but we also wanted to stop and smell the roses, so we stopped at many marinas to visit famous coastal towns like St. Augustine, Charleston, Beaufort, etc. Once we got to the Erie Canal, tying-up overnight on bulkheads just about anywhere was low, or no, cost. Same thing in the Trent-Severn regarding lock walls, but the U.S.-to-Canadian dollar exchange rate was in our favor and what they charged at marinas per-foot was ridiculously cheap compared to what we paid in the Bahamas or Florida. On Lake Michigan, we enjoyed quite a few marinas as well because the towns are great to walk, eat, and drink in! I like researching and finding new craft microbreweries and Michigan has no shortage of them.

What were the roughest conditions you encountered?

Two times come to mind. First being when we came up the ICW in April, it was still cold in the north and the Pamlico Sound in North Carolina had long, five-foot rollers coming down that we were motoring into for about 18 miles before we turned beam to them. The stabilizers work great on beam seas, but not so much on head-on seas. Secondly, in northern Lake Michigan, we had a very short period two to three-foot swells, predominantly on the bow at first, but later just off the bow. And this is when our stabilizers were down, and we were waiting for the new touch screen display. Neither time was it bad or unsafe, just a little uncomfortable.

What do you carry for electronics? How big a help is radar, autopilot, plotter?

Oh boy, we could write a book on this as we spec'd the boat without electronics and did all the installation ourselves during our first year of ownership. For primary navigation, we have a dual display PC system with Nobeltec's TIMEZERO Professional Software. This is integrated with Furuno TZtouch2 systems; one in the pilothouse and one on the flybridge. We have two Furuno depth sounders and Furuno is our choice for Autopilot and Radar. In general, all has worked well, but there are always nuances and a few gotcha's that you will discover that can drive you a bit nuts.

What do you need to know about navigating in Canadian waters?

How to read a chart—and it's no big deal compared to U.S. waters. Obviously, you should know about how and where to clear customs, and that the buoyage system in the canal systems changes based on if you're locking up or locking down and the direction of travel. Basically, red-right-returning holds true half-way through the canals, and then it reverses for the second half. No big deal, just pay attention! ■

