



## Destination McClellanville, SC

By Ted McGee

Photographs by Ted McGee, unless otherwise credited to Liz McCafferty

Dora and I didn't have much opportunity to sail in 2023 and we were really looking forward to a cruise sponsored by Eric and Liz McCafferty. The cruise would originate at the Cooper River Marina in Charleston with McClellanville, SC as the turn around point. It was a small group of sailors that participated in the cruise, consisting of only three Catalina 22s.

- ◆ Eric and Liz McCafferty (cruise leaders) on *Seanchai*
- ◆ Robert Donehoo and his brother Ben on *Wingin' It*
- ◆ Ted and Dora McGee on *Rhapsody in seA*

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*Top:*

*Eric and Liz McCafferty (cruise leaders) on Seanchai*

*Middle left:*

*Robert Donehoo and his brother Ben on Wingin' It*

*Lower right:*

*Ted and Dora McGee on Rhapsody in seA*

*Photograph by Liz McCafferty*

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Robert, Ben, Dora, and I arrived at Remleys Point Public Boat Landing on Tuesday, October 24th. We were met by Eric and Liz who helped us rig and launch our boats. From there we motored to the Cooper River Marina for the night. Eric drove our truck and trailer and Ben drove Robert's to the marina where they would be kept until we returned from the cruise.

We made final preparations for the cruise and enjoyed a potluck dinner at the marina. Eric and Liz gave the cruise participants some awesome gifts, including a beautiful book about Castle Pinckney, a historical site in Charleston Harbor we would pass on our cruise. The book was written by Liz and contains lots of her amazing photographs.

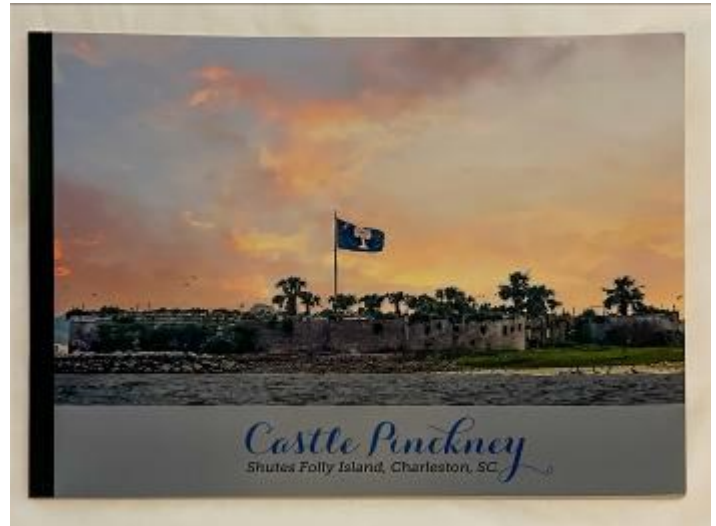
A cruise with fellow Catalina 22 sailors can be as much about the journey as the destination. I was looking forward to the destination but enjoyed every minute of the journey.

## The Journey

We departed Cooper River Marina around 0900, Wednesday October 25<sup>th</sup>. Our journey would follow a route under the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge and into Charleston Harbor where we would pass the Yorktown at Patriot's Point and Castle Pinckney. At the east end of Charleston Harbor, we would turn north and pass under the Ben Sawyer Bridge. From there we would follow the Intracoastal Waterway past Sullivan's Island, Breech Inlet, and Isle of Palms.

We anchored for the night at Capers Island. Strong currents made a beach anchor difficult, and the group opted to anchor out a little and dinghy ashore. That evening we cooked dinner over a fire on the beach, talked and visited well after dark. Getting back to our boats was a little more challenging than we anticipated. The outgoing current was running about two-and-a-half knots and our little dinghy motors were put to the test. Everyone made it back safely and we turned in for the night.

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*Book Gifted to Participants by Liz McCafferty*



*Birds Gathered Together Near Capers Island*

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We were underway around 0800 Thursday morning, October 26th, headed for our destination of McClellanville. We followed the Intracoastal Waterway pretty much without incident all day. It wasn't until after lunch we came across the American Eagle, a 100-passenger cruise ship headed south to Charleston. The Intracoastal Waterway was narrow with a fair amount of shoaling on each side. The ship was making slow progress. We could see she was churning up a lot of silt and mud behind her and we would have to pass with caution. We slowly picked our way along her port side, safely passing through the silt and continued along our way.



*Headed for McClellanville*

## The Destination

In McClellanville we tied up for the night at Leland Oil Company Dock. Lacey, our dockmaster bent over backwards to make sure we had everything needed for the night, including fuel, ice, power, and showers. That evening we strolled through the historic town, full of wonderful old homes and churches. We made mental notes of the places we would like to see the next day. We ate dinner at TW Graham & Company Restaurant. Everything on our table was delicious and well prepared. The chef made the rounds to make sure everyone enjoyed their meal.



*Lacey, our Amazing Dockmaster*

Friday morning, October 27, cameras in hand, we explored McClellanville. I was particularly interested in the St. James-Santee Parish Episcopal Church. The church was established in 1687 and the building currently in use was erected in 1890. We were also able to photograph the interior.

Next, we stopped at the McClellanville United Methodist Church. This amazing church was built in 1902. Standing in a park across the street is the Deerhead Oak. The Deerhead Oak is larger in circumference, 30.6 feet, and height, 67 feet, than the famed Angel Oak on Johns Island, SC. It is over 1,000 years old. Some estimates of the tree's age are more than 1500 years old. It is thought to be the oldest living thing east of the Mississippi River.

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*Historic Home*



*Historic Home*



*St. James-Santee Parish Episcopal Church*



*St. James-Santee Parish Episcopal Church*

*McClellanville United Methodist Church*



*Deerhead Oak*

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The McClellanville Arts Council and the Town of McClellanville created a “Solar System Walk.” The walk is a scale of our solar system. One adult foot-step is equivalent to 3.6 million miles in space. Following the Solar System Walk along Pinckney Street we found our way to the Village Museum. There we met Bud Hill, one of the directors and long-term resident. Opened in 1999 exhibits include a history of the town, including the SeeWee Indians, the postwar farmer, and the rise of the seafood industry.

We spent the remainder of the day sailing Five Fathom Creek, directly across from Jeremy Creek and McClellanville. We entered Five Fathom Creek near channel marker 24. From there we sailed to where Five Fathom Creek and the Atlantic Ocean meet and back.

We anchored for the night in Five Fathom Creek with the intent to make a quick stop in McClellanville the next morning before setting out for Capers Island.

On Saturday October 28 we headed back to the Leland Oil Co. Dock. We had a small amount of time to visit the McClellanville Arts Council art gallery and Oscar and Cornelius Gift Shop. We needed to be underway by 1130 to get back to Capers Island before nightfall.

Robert, Ben, and Liz rode with Dora and I on Rhapsody in seA over to McClellanville. Eric stayed with the other two boats, still at anchor. Our first stop was the gift shop. It turned out that Bud Hill is a well-known artist in the area. I purchased one of his original drawings. We had picked up a few other items and started walking towards the art gallery. Along the way a resident stopped and offered to take our purchases to the marina for us. In most other places I would decline such an offer, but in McClellanville it seemed perfectly normal. After visiting the art gallery and returning to the marina, we found our purchases waiting for us at the office. We returned to the anchorage and transferred everyone safely back to their boats.

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*Shrimp Boat Returning from the Atlantic Ocean to McClellanville*



*Jeremy Creek from Leland Oil Co. Dock*

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## Putting Toothpaste Back in the Tube

We motored across the Intracoastal Waterway to McClellanville and back with no issues. Back in Five Fathom Creek everyone transferred to their boats, and we set out, on time, for Capers Island. Coming out of Five Fathom Creek water was running about 7 feet deep under the keel. Near marker 24 we hit ground. I had somehow managed to find what seemed like the only high spot.

The outgoing tide was running about 2 knots and there was little time to resolve the situation. Eric, Robert, and Ben all helped to try and free us. Our best efforts to get free proved useless. We quickly found ourselves standing on a tiny island. The wing keel on our boat was soon out of the water. Robert also has a wing keel and was able to motor completely around us without getting stuck. You can see in the photo his boat is floating free right next to ours. In addition, our stern is floating while the keel and bow are out of the water.

In retrospect and after reviewing the charts a little closer, it appears I cut the corner a little closer than I had previously. All we could do was wait for the tide to come back in. It wasn't long before the water began to rise and as quickly as the little island appeared it disappeared. With a little help from Robert, Ben, and Eric we were soon free. Fortunately, the boat sustained no damage. No one was hurt, except for a little pride.

We were underway around 1500. We knew we would be unable to make Capers by nightfall, so Eric and Liz looked for an alternate anchorage for the night. We motored as long as we could before pulling into Graham Creek for the night. Capers Island was still two hours south of us.

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*Grounded*

*Photograph by Liz McCafferty*



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## The Final Leg

We were up at first light, Sunday October 29. We had to make up the two hours we lost Saturday if we were going to make it back to Cooper River Marina at a reasonable hour. We followed the Intracoastal Waterway south, retracing our route back to Charleston. Not far from Capers Island we spotted a bald eagle on the rooftop of an old house. We cleared Sawyer Bridge around 1400 and turned east. We were able to set sail in Charleston harbor for a while, but a dying breeze and the weekend boat traffic made it hard to sail. Eventually we took the sails in and motored the rest of way, passing Castle Pinckney, the Charleston Battery, Patriots Point, and the Yorktown. We pulled into Cooper River Marina around 1630.



*Bald Eagle Sighting*

That evening the group all went out for Mexican dinner and relived the adventure through our stories and tales of derring-do. We tallied up lessons learned and talked about the next great adventure.

## The Pull Out

All that was left was to motor back to Remleys Point Public Boat Landing. We were up before the Sun on Monday, October 30. We wanted to get across the river to the boat ramp early. As soon as it got light enough to see we headed out in a dense fog. Although visibility was low, we knew where we were going. We also weren't expecting any commercial traffic. We slipped into Remleys Point without incident. Eric and Ben were waiting for us with our tow rigs. All that was left was to break everything down and head home.

## Epilogue

Many thanks to Eric and Liz for their careful planning, hosting the adventure, and their wonderful gifts. Their boat is named Seanchaí, which is a traditional Gaelic storyteller or historian. It is a fitting name for the owners of this beautiful boat. We met Eric and Liz on the 2017 Northern Gulf Coast Cruise and became instant friends, something that frequently happens sailing a Catalina 22. The couple is as friendly as they are helpful and generous. This was the second Charleston cruise they had organized, and it turned out to be a rewarding and fun-filled adventure. Liz has a wonderful ability to put together a story and share it with illustrations of her own photography and storytelling expertise. Her beautiful photography and stories can be found on her blog: <https://lizmccaffertyblog.wordpress.com>.