



Whittaker Point Marina

August 4th 2011

I had decided to take my youngest two kids on a late summer cruise before school started. I usually trailer *Dragonfly* to the Albemarle Sound for this sort of soirée but this time I wanted to try some new waters so I did a bit of research on “Active Captain” and found a well rated marina out of Oriental North Carolina. I chose a marina called Whittaker Point Marina and I emailed the dock master and asked about transient slips and the possibility of launching *Dragonfly*. And I got a very friendly reply from the assistant dock master “Buck”. He said he would be waiting for us and would shuttle us from the public boat launch. We arrived mid-afternoon on Thursday August 4th to a later afternoon “pop-up” thunderstorm. We couldn’t launch so we hung out in the courtesy lounge, played some cards and talked to the local “live-a-boards” who reside at Whittaker Point waiting for the end of hurricane season. Buck got out a chart and showed us all of his favorite ghunkholes and marked them for us on our chart. *Dragonfly* was parked out front on her trailer and we turned in for the night at “dry dock”.

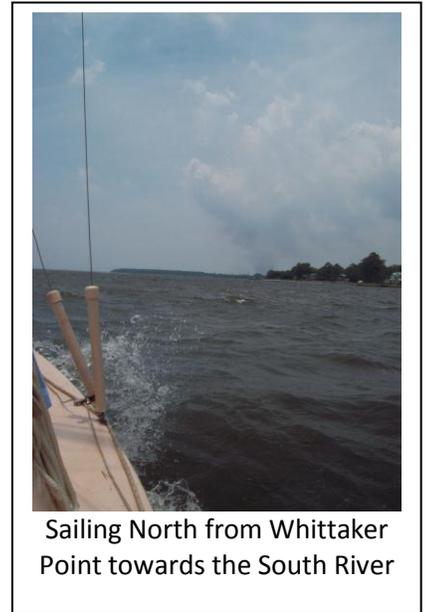
Friday August 5th 2012

At first light we took *Dragonfly* to the public launch and put her in the water. We sailed *Dragonfly* back to the marina and Buck gave me a ride back to the launch to pick up my vehicle. On our way back to the launch, Buck gave a quick tour of town, showed me his favorite restaurants and gave a little history of the town. We ate a late breakfast of bjp sandwiches, made the boat ready and took off at 1000h down the Neuse River bound for The South River.



Setting up for launch.

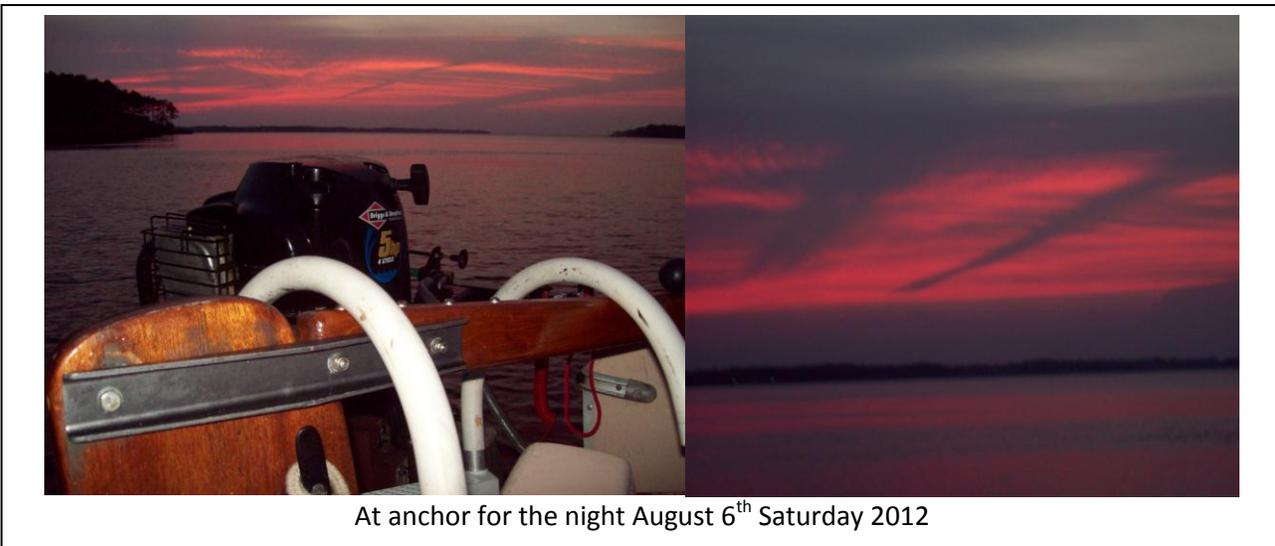
We had a marvelous sail with a beam reach all the way and entered the mouth of the South River around noon. I also had the misfortune of dropping my hand held VHF overboard as we entered the South River. We sailed all the way to a tributary that branched off to starboard and we sailed all the way to the end. Buck had told us that if we went up far enough, we would find a "lagoon" that had once been a rice farm. We found it and anchored for lunch. I also took the time to drop the mast and fix a disobedient windex. We were hot and wanted a swim but the water was full of stinging nettles so we set up a tarp over the boom and took a short nap under the tarp. Around 1600h we set sail and made our way down the tributary back to the South River and found a nice weather shore with a bit of shelter and we dropped anchor for the night. I walked out two other anchors in a triangular pattern and we watched the sun set in a brilliant purple sky. We also had the company of a mother porpoise and her cub. I brought out the camping stove and made a dinner of scrambled eggs and sausage.



Sailing North from Whittaker Point towards the South River



At anchor for lunch.



At anchor for the night August 6th Saturday 2012

We were up early and I made coffee and eggs in the pre-dawn light. We took a sail down the South River back towards the Neuse River. We spotted another sailboat at anchor and we also spotted an intriguing natural bayou. The girls wanted to explore the bayou so we rolled up the keel and took a slow meander up the bayou.



After our trip down the bayou, we sailed back into the South River, spotted a strip of white sand poking out of the edge of the salt marsh so we decided it was time for lunch on the beach.





The wind really picked up at about 1400h so we decided to head back to the Neuse River to catch some wind. The wind was clocking at 15kt and we put up our 75% jib and put in a reef on the main sail. We were cutting through chop and running at hull speed on a southerly heading. Many sailboats out of Oriental were out that day and we chased down a Catalina 27 on our way back to Whittaker Point.



Since we were all the way back to Oriental, I decided to put in at Whittaker Point Marina and drive into town to replace my VHF. I wanted to be able to check the weather reports and I didn't feel safe without a way to communicate with other boats.



We stopped off at West Marine for a new VHF radio. This time I hooked a float to my radio ☺. We stopped off for pizza at a place called The Silos. The Silos are a really interesting restaurant actually made from silos. I don't know if it has something to do with boating or what but it seems that every time we are on a cruise, the food we eat is the best ever. No exception at the Silos.



We took showers, played a few hands of cards and turned in for the night at our slip at Whittaker Point Marina.

Sunday Morning

Sunday morning we found a quaint coffee shop for breakfast in town and then we headed back to the marina. We were planning one last sail for the day and then we were going to put *Dragonfly* back on the trailer and head home. I dropped the trailer off at the public launch, Buck gave me a ride back to the Marina, the girls headed to the pool while I settled up with Buck but first I put in a call to a delivery pizza place and then I went to see Buck. He clicked and clacked on a calculator and then told me that I owed him --- wait for it ---- \$33.

What! We came in Thursday night, showered, came back Saturday night and showered again... and left our van and trailer there for 4 days, got two free rides from Buck... used the pool... charts...and he wanted to charge me \$33!

I said wait a minute Buck, I need to be able to sleep at night. I owe you at least \$200. He laughed and said to me... but you only tied off at the slip Saturday night so you owe me \$33. I wrote Buck a check for \$80. We said goodbye to our new favorite marina and made a southerly heading down the Neuse. We sailed for about 5 more hours, pulled into the public launch, made the boat ready and hauled her home. A perfect weekend.

Epilogue:

About a week later I was making the boat ready for a day sail and I could not find my rudder. OH MY GOD! I had left my rudder on the ground next to the boat at the ramp in Oriental. I could not believe how stupid I was. So I got on the Oriental "Town Dock" website and put up a notice that I had lost my rudder. A day later a guy emailed me and said he had it. A few days later it showed up at my house in a UPS truck. I could not believe it. Just to keep the karma going, I sent the guy a new VHF hand held radio.



See our story from March 2012 about our trip to Ocracoke.