



# Special DELIVERY

THE STORY OF THE DELIVERY  
OF A 47 FOOT COMMANDER

AS TOLD BY:

DICK MORLAND  
DAVE DISESA  
JW HOLCOMB

## Dick Morland:

The true story – Two versions! Many club members know bits & pieces of this story, but for the first time the entire story, direct from the keyboards of two major players. In October of 2009 Patty & I sold our beloved 38' Commander Sedan to club member Sam Carter and purchased PADDY WAGON, a 47', from club member Duke Norton. We closed on the 47' in October, and part of the deal included winter storage inside at St. Clair Shores, MI, as late October

can get pretty nasty on the Great Lakes, and we were 700 water miles from home. Plans were made to pick the boat up in the spring, and Patty & I headed for Florida to escape the Midwest winter.

While driving home on March 1, 2010, I became quite ill, and couldn't even finish the job of driving home. About 6 hours after arriving home, my temperature was 104.5 and we headed for the hospital, where I spent the next 3 weeks in critical care with a nasty case of Legionnaires pneumonia. I was really "circling the drain" and almost died 3 times, but modern medicine brought me back from the brink. I spent 3 months in a nursing home undergoing intensive rehab, and in late May I walked out of the nursing home with a cane, albeit somewhat slowly.

Needless to say, I was in no condition for a 700 mile trip on the

Great Lakes and was considering leaving the boat in storage for a year, when a casual conversation with club member (and good friend) Dave DiSesa revealed he would be willing to bring PADDY WAGON back to Michigan City for us! Dave is a really good motorhead who runs his own boat repair business, plus being a skilled delivery Captain. WOW! It doesn't get any better than this! We will get to use our boat this summer after all! Long time friend JW Holcomb, who also has been my dock mate for the last 25 years quickly volunteered to be part of the crew, as did club member Jack Bonczyk, who is one of Dave's Florida neighbors.

Late June was selected to both mesh with Dave's schedule (of the three, he's the only one not retired) and for the hope of better seas than one normally gets in our windy springs. The following two articles

tell this story, with Dave's being short & sweet, while JW elaborates with detail. Remember as you read this, with the exception of JW and the "rag bagger" mentioned in his article, every person in these two stories became treasured friends of ours because of the Commander Club. We have the nicest people in the world in our club, and the following is a great example of friends helping friends. Patty & I (& both Golden Retrievers who love their new boat) owe these friends more than we can ever repay for their part in this boat delivery

In the words of my Norwegian ancestors, "Mange Tusen Tuck", (Many Thousand Thanks).

*Dick & Patty Morland*

## Dave DiSesa:

I just returned from taking a friend's mint 1970 47' Chris Craft Commander from Jefferson Beach Marina in St. Clair Shores, MI, to Michigan City, IN.

It started out with a friend picking me up at Midway airport in Chicago and driving me up to stay for the weekend aboard his pristine 1981 56' Hatteras MY in Saugatuck, MI. Every year he puts on a pig roast for the marina and this was the weekend. I got drafted to help with the cooking. We picked up 100 lbs of cut up pig and a huge cooker. We rubbed the pig down with garlic and salt, and then double bagged it, put in into a kiddie pool purchased for the task, then packed it in ice until morning.

The next morning at 6 dark thirty, we set up the cooker, then wrapped chicken wire around the meat and tied it with wire.



We started cooking and took turns dousing the meat with wine every 20 minutes and rotating the meat every 45 min. This went on for 10 hrs and about 6 gallons of wine and many bags of mesquite chips and hickory chips.

There is a tradition on that day that a dinghy run is held while the meat cooks. It's kind of a dinghy poker run on the Kalamazoo River while trying to drown each other with water cannons. Some even had gas powered pumps in their dinghies!

A dock mate loaned me and

hard bottom hit me on my right hip and took me right out of the boat into the river with two propellers coming right at me.

I swam as hard as I could away from both boats and surfaced. Fortunately both operators had killed their engines with the safety lanyards.

Everyone was yelling and I told JW to come pick me up as I could not swim against the current.

My hip hurt like hell, the tops of both feet were sliced and I was bleeding a little from my right ankle. My expensive sunglasses were gone



*A true crew: JW Holcomb, Jack Bonczyk, and Dave DiSesa, prepare for their journey.*

JW Holcomb (who was also going on the trip with us) his old dinghy with a 4hp Evinrude that ran at half speed.

I should mention my host has a new RIB with a 50HP on it.

I confiscated 3 water cannon's; paid the \$20.00 entry fee and we were off. We held our own heading up to the first clue and card of seven. We held our own even though we were the slowest.

Half way to the lake where the cards was to be picked up, our host came back toward us with the rigid inflatable. He was hauling tail and getting very close. Next thing I knew his bow was coming over us and right at me!

In a split second I thought "this is how people get killed!" I tried to push back against his bow, but the

also. I sat in the boat thinking about what just happened and told our host that I hurt but was sort of OK.

Meanwhile the cooking continued and the party went on... We did not win the \$285 for the dinghy run, but I was happy that I was not in worse shape. I took one of the scooters to town to get some new sunglasses and later walked to town for some drinks and remember walking the mile back to the boat in pain!

The next morning the three of us left for Jefferson Beach Marina and the 47' Commander.

We were doing this delivery for a Dick Morland, who almost died back in March and was still not in any condition to move it himself.

I take my deliveries seriously

and have some hard and fast rules.

I had never been on a boat with either of the people going with me and the boat had not been used in the last two years. Lots of assurances were made and people got offended when I asked questions. I was told repeatedly that “everything was ready to go, sea trialed, and full of fuel”.

The next morning we head out into a gloomy, choppy Lake St Clair and head north. The promised 15 kt. cruise was a pipe dream and I settle in on 9.3 kts. heading north.

The first stop was going to be Port Sanilac, MI., but in spite of bumpy seas and a hard riding Chris Craft we decide to go for Harbor Beach, MI. Ten miles out of Harbor Beach while I am doing an engine room check, I hear the engines go out of sync.

I run up to the helm and the stbd. engine is surging, then the generator shuts down. Crap! The stbd. fuel gauge shows a quarter and the port shows between half and a quarter. I don't trust gauges and figured that the trip should take 240 gallons tops and the boat holds 350. I am torqued off beyond words! I always top off a boat before a delivery and I broke one of my rules because the previous owner swore that it was topped off before going into the building for winter storage! He got frustrated when I wanted to top it off.

Ten miles to go, 25 knots of wind on the bow, and no fuel. I mull over the options and figure that we have about 6 gallons of fuel in jugs for filling filters. I put on a life jacket and get onto the swim platform while JW hands me the three jugs and I pour them into the port tank to hopefully get us in. I keep thinking about running out of fuel between the marina and rock jetties with the worry of the wind taking us onto the rocks.

I pull out anchor line and get both anchors ready to deploy if needed. We slog along for what seemed like an eternity and finally make it to the fuel dock. The stbd. 175 gal tank takes 177gal, the port tank 144 gal.

The winds get worse. I tried to leave the next morning and got 10 miles north before turning around and heading back to our slip and top

off with 30 gallons for the wasted 20 miles. We sit for two days. Harbor Beach is our favorite stop.

Two days later we leave and beat our way to Presque Isle in head seas and torrents of spray, taking it on the chin.

Next day we are excited to turn west toward the Mackinaw Straits. We meet head winds of 26 knots steady and uncomfortable seas. We make our turn towards Grays Reef Channel and a little better ride. We make it to Charlevoix.

Leave Charlevoix at 5:45am to get the bridge opened on demand as I did not enjoy waiting in the canal for the bridge to open on the way in. We again are happy to be in Lake Michigan; however the seas and wind are again on our bow. The seas build and we head for Frankfort. We lay over in Frankfort on the 4th of July while the boat rocks in the slip due to the wind driven wavelets in the harbor.

Leave on the 5th and while forecasts were not good we make it to Grand Haven. The marina stays open late to fuel us (Jack owns the 56' Hatteras, stores his boat in the building and spends a fair amount of money there.) We fuel and head to municipal marina where we have a perfect view for the musical water fountain.

Next morning we leave with a straight course to Michigan City.

Of course the lake is not done with us and we have to slow down for two hours before the lake lays down 30 miles out of MC. The last three hours were the only nice water of the trip.

We ran 69 hours and the 40 year old Cummins VT370's never missed a beat. I only put one quart of oil in the stbd. engine. The 40 year old Onan generator ran flawlessly as well. The owner is beaming and on the boat as I type this. He loves his new boat. The end.

## JW Holcomb:

I have been friends with Dick Morland for about 35 years. When I became a Chris-Craft owner it was largely due to his influence. Indeed, my knowledge of my boat, and much of what I know about boats overall has grown in direct proportion to our time together. It has been a relationship which shared joys and down times together with an unbroken level of involvement properly called family.

I knew of Dick & Patty's search and purchase of a 47' Commander, and having shared a finger pier with our 38' Commanders side by side for nearly 2 decades, I also knew their 47' would need to move to another larger slip. It was late Summer, 2009. Dick and Patty were



*The crew and their Chief. Dick Morland happily onboard his new 47' safe and sound.*

set to spend much of the winter house sitting for friends in Florida, and we had already talked about picking up the 47' from winter storage in St Clair Shores, MI in the Spring of 2010. We spoke often by phone, typically during cocktail hour, and solidified the plan.

Then tragedy hit. Upon leaving Florida, Dick began to feel ill, and then worsened to the point where he was even unable to drive. Knowing Dick as I do, this told me things were already quite serious. Within a few hours of returning home, Patty took him to the local ER where he was quickly admitted. His condition did not improve, but instead became critical and a decision was made to induce a coma to facilitate his systems fight against a deadly disease. In the weeks that followed the boat became a very secondary consideration.

These notes will not detail the following weeks, but suffice to say they were at best tense. When Dick finally began rehabilitation in a nursing home it was clear that my friend, who had so often helped me and so many others, would now need assistance himself.

First up was preparing his then 38' Commander for transport to her new owner, Sam Carter. The boat was going by land to Washington, DC, and that meant preparation for the road trip which included bridge removal and more. Members Lawrence Neisler, Scott Abbott, and I, along with another dock buddy, "rag bagger" Tim, took on the task. Dick was actually well enough to travel the 105 miles from his home to join us in Michigan City, AKA Mecca, but, still recovering, was limited to supervision from the ground.

The job was a challenge, but our team had the boat ready for

pickup on time. Upon arrival in DC, the trucker said he had never had a transport where nothing had to be touched. The load, including the bridge we had locked down on the cabin roof never moved.

#### **Day one ---**

Now it was time to plan the pickup of the 47'. The crew was selected by Dick, each club member for a skill set he knew was present. On arrival there was talk of 3 Captains. To be sure all three of us Dave DiSesa, Jack Bonczyk, and I had experience and might have brought the boat in. At this early point I did not want conflict,



*JW at the helm of Dick Morland's 47' Commander.*

and was quite ok with stepping aside. I recall my father once said, "If you ever want to give orders, you need to know how to take them." I could not speak for Jack, but I did know there should be only one Captain, and David DiSesa was clearly the best qualified for the situation. I was clear in my opinion, and given there were 3 of us, it was a decision made. To his credit, Dave stepped gently into his role and Jack and I put our skills to the tasks at hand.

Dick had prepared for the trip with detailed lists of ships resources, and Patty has assured a well stocked larder. There was no one along for the ride. Our group was all crew and the experience showed as we went smoothly underway.

Jack, who is a professional pilot, had outstanding navigational skills and his ongoing attention to our course was a real asset. He also read the weather well, which, as time went on, came to be a factor more often than we would have liked.

Before leaving St Clair Shores we spent our first evening together. A cordial dinner at the local yacht club included quick personal histories, and we even discovered harmony in our political leanings. Having been advised of the full fuel tanks and stocked galley, we focused our attention on navigation

and the timetable suggested by Dick. In terms of division of labor, I volunteered to manage and record our expenditures and began by using Dick's credit card to pay our dinner bill.

We slept pretty well that first night on the 47', probably due to the prior day's activities in Saugatuck, MI, where we had stayed on Jack's beautiful 55' Hatteras.

That day we participated in a dock club barbeque and a dingy derby of 10 boats or so. Part of the program included buzzing by the other boats and unloading water guns on the hapless victims. Dave and I were in a borrowed dingy with a very poor running small outboard. Jack was at the wheel of his much larger dinghy with one or two passengers. As he came towards us to align for a close water gun run, his rising bow must have blocked his view, and he ran over us amidships. I was in the stern and my shoulder was grazed. Dave raised his arms to fend off, but was hit hard and wound up in the water. I pulled the safety cord to kill our engine, as I feared the prop might hit him, but the spinning prop of the other boat posed the greater threat. Dave is very strong

and popped to the surface quickly, sans sun glasses, but the current was brisk and despite swimming towards me he was drifting away. I was able to restart with little delay and picked him up. Inventory revealed all limbs to be present, but bruises and abrasions were already showing on Dave's hip, legs and arms. Though he remained stoic, I could see that Dave's hip continued to bother him for several days.

### Day two

"Manly Men of the Sea" as we were, we all arose at around 7 AM and skipped breakfast.

This would become our routine, with the objective of getting the most out of daylight while

still arriving in each port early enough to assure a slip. Today would be our first leg and take us via the St Clair River, to Lake Huron.

Dave took the helm, whilst Jack and I cast off. So far, so good. It was a particularly interesting cruise which found us with Canada on our starboard side, and the US on port. I was comforted by the fact that we all brought our passports. This

was a potential entry point between the two countries, and there was a strong presence of authorities from both sides. Accordingly, other boats we passed seemed to be on their best behavior, not speeding or throwing wakes. All, including us, maintained a goodly distance between vessels. Our pace was not fast, but it was steady and we passed several vessels. We dutifully gave the required blasts, however on all but one occasion there was no response.

It was during this first day that we settled on a model for helm duty. We would rotate about every two hours. In addition, one of the others would act as co-pilot, managing the GPS, and checking charts.

The model proved to be ideal so we continued it later, even when we made extensive use of the boat's auto pilot.

There was no stopping for lunch, so the man not on duty acted as cook and waiter providing sandwiches, snacks, and such. It also became typical for the man not on, to grab a nap as needed!

In that I had been close to Dick for so many years, I took on the task of keeping him apprised of our position and relevant issues. The engine noise made cell conversation difficult so I began to send crude text messages to Dick. (No.....not that kind of crude.) Absent a keyboard my



*Jack Bonczyk at the helm!*

very basic phone only allowed me to carefully tap out a few words from a standard 1-9 keyboard. I often just sent our latitude and longitude.

We exited the St Clair River into the waters of Lake Huron. In contrast to the river, the waves were 3's and 4's and the seas confused. This however was our first chance to generate a wake without consequence and, once course was set, we began to experiment with speed and trim. The diesels answered the helm then, and every time for the rest of the trip. The boat came up on plane, but despite best efforts to trim the slaps were more than occasional. The headwinds were also pretty strong and the combination guaranteed a steady spray. Even after

our better judgment directed us to back off on the throttles, the overall effect was that we could not move about absent a good grip and clear target. On deck movement typically involved a hand on the helm seat, and one or two steps to a seat or another grab point. The best course to our first port, Port Sanilac, found us several miles out. No matter. Our vessel was seaworthy and we were hearty. As part of our skilled helmsmanship we had watched RPM, engine temps and fuel. The gauges were steady and reassuring. In fact, the fuel gauge had stopped moving entirely. Exactly when, we were not sure, but yes indeed it was still. The logical conclusions...

one tank, maybe both, were much lower than we had calculated. How was this possible? We were assured that the tanks were full, and we were well within projected fuel range.

What kind of Fool Am I? Another advantage of having Dave on any ship is his prodigious mechanical skills. We noticed that one side had our batteries charging at too high a rate.

Dave was in the engine room checking this out, and I was at the helm. As Dave took the battery temp, and cut off the alternator to avoid cooking the batteries, the gen set stopped. In the next few seconds the engine sped up. I noticed it at the helm, and Dave, still below, did too. We both knew what the speeding up of the engine meant; indeed it has probably happened to every kid who ever ran an outboard or model airplane engine --- an engine running out of fuel leans out and momentarily speeds up just before dying. Dave quickly returned to the deck, and questioned the maternal lineage of no one in particular. I suspect that whilst below his more spontaneous commentary included

even more colorful metaphors. Later as Dave criticized himself for ignoring his own better judgment, Jack and I reminded him it took 3 experienced men, (actually 4 including Dick), to share the unfortunate decision not to fill the tanks prior to departing St Clair Shores.

So, the next port, Harbor Beach was still 10 miles away, we were in some fairly rough seas with wind at about 25 knots, and we had no fuel in one tank, and probably just a bit more in the other. Before the trip Dick had asked me to fill up 3 cans of fuel in case we needed to prime/change filters. We had about 7 gallons of fuel and decided to put it all in ASAP. We did not stop. While Jack took the helm, Dave stood on the swim platform, and I began to feed the small cans down to Dave. After the first, it became evident the safety pouring mechanisms on the cans made it almost impossible to do the job. As Jack's experienced hand held course and maintained as much stability as possible, I found an old fashioned can down below and transferred the contents of each of the 2 remaining cans to the older one. As Dave continued his balancing act on the swim platform, I laid on the deck and reached over the stern to pass the can down, so he could reach it while still hanging on with his other hand. Then he passed it back, I refilled and passed again, and we now had 7 or so additional gallons!

Not much in boat our size, but as it turned out, just enough to keep us running right into Harbor Beach. Given the wind, we radioed ahead so the gas dock would be ready to catch us. Then, as Dave put it, we slogged along for eternity. Entering the harbor we immediately spotted the dock. It was perfectly suited to a small runabout, as was the attendant, a young lady of about 115 pounds who looked up in awe at our

47 foot vessel about 5 feet above her. With the wind blowing us towards the little dock, Jack was at the helm. Dave and I prepared to fend off. The dock was so low, it was a major leap down for us to reach it, and not one dock post was tall enough to even reach the gunwale. We took places at the stern and amidships, but the wind over powered us and the boat bumped in and the top of one post scratched the side. Owing to the wind I couldn't make out exactly what the others said, but if it was anything close to what I uttered they should be ashamed.

The starboard 175 gal tank



*Dave DiSesa checks the charts.*

takes 177 gallons, the port tank takes 144 gallons. We were, as they say... on fumes! I sent Dick a quick text to announce our arrival.

Once in our slip, I decide it's a good time to call Dick with details and such. Dick then proceeds to tell me what color shirt I have on! Turns out there are video cameras in the harbor and Dick is actually looking at us on the net! I am, once again, amazed.

#### **Days three & four –**

Land for awhile -- The weather kept us there for 2 days but Harbor Beach turned out to be one of most pleasant harbors and towns of the entire trip. Bicycles were available and we all used them to ride to town. Later that day we even ran into another Commander Club member, Al Langlois with his beautiful 41 Roamer, Kimberly Ann. Wireless internet

was supposed to reach us in our slip, although it only seemed to work when we sat outside the Harbor Master's office.

#### **Day 4 --**

We take a shot at leaving, but after only 10 rough miles we turned back. Recalling our earlier experience we stop at the fuel dock and top off again!

The Town had a small theater at which I saw Batman, (the movie, not the actual hero). Left the bike outside, no lock needed. There were 2 or 3 nice places to eat at fair prices, and the streets were a pleasure to take walks. Much conversation was dedicated to how did we leave without checking the fuel?? On the bright side though, we had others to blame, which is always a welcome mitigating factor.

#### **Day five --**

Morning of the third day in Harbor Beach we leave, and beat our way to Presque Isle in head seas and torrents of spray. Taking it on the chin.? ( Gotta love Dave's sense of nautical drama.) The seas were indeed rough, and it was on

this leg we decided on what would be our optimal cruise speed, which was between 9 and 10 mph. At that speed, the engines hummed easily, the hull didn't pound, and, as Dick often says, the boat was happy at this speed.

We were now into a smooth rhythm rotating helm duties and monitoring position. The chart showed a buoy in a good position for course adjustment, and I scanned the horizon diligently, if unsuccessfully, to find it. Still, when our well-set and maintained course took us within 50 yards of it, I finally saw it! I even snapped a photo of it. (Why, I have no idea.)

#### **Days six & seven --**

Presque Isle was another delightful small town. In that our trip was taking longer than anticipated, Jack decided to rent a car, return home

briefly, and then rejoin us before the next leg. Turned out renting a car was a bit more complex in this little town and only after much effort was he able to rent one from a used car dealer. In the meantime, whilst on the phone with Dick, he advised Dave that he was going to drive up and see us. Now I knew that he was still recovering from his recent illness, and that a drive of that distance was not a great idea. However, I also knew after 30 plus years of friendship, that any argument on the subject would be futile.

After Dick & Patty arrived we enjoyed a prolonged cocktail hour while Dave and I made sure we included the kind of boat operation details that we knew would be of interest. As dinner hour approached, Jack returned from his sojourn, and we all went to a local restaurant and enjoyed a delicious dinner and boating camaraderie.

The next day we were ready to leave. I took a walk down the main street of town to the breakwater to check the lake. Waves were breaking over the rocks with spray 8 or 10 feet high. I walked back and discussed my observations with the others. Bottom line ...we stayed another day in Presque Isle.

The town library was only a block down from our mooring. It was closed, but the Wi-Fi reached outside to a bench. I wrote home via laptop reporting yet another delay.

#### **Day eight –**

Early the next day we began the leg that would take us under the Mackinaw Bridge and into Lake Michigan. The wind was, as it always seemed to be, very brisk and the chop presented us with mostly 2's and the occasional 3's. I was at helm and one of the tour boats that go back and forth to the island was just off our bow was sporting a huge rooster tail. I wanted to get a good picture and Jack and I decided to climb up to the flybridge.

The view was indeed worth it! It was like flying with wind in our hair and the sky above. At once there is the feeling of power as our powerful diesels push aside the chop contrasted with the sense of being so small compared with the steel super



*Mackinac Bridge dead ahead! JW Holcomb (top) and Jack Bonczyk (bottom) happily*

structure and concrete bases as we passed under the bridge. Jack snapped pictures of me, and I of him; both of us posing at the wheel. Truth was, Dave was still below at the helm, but the photo opportunity was too good to pass up.

Once into Lake Michigan there was absolutely no change in sea conditions. The remainder of this leg which brought us to Charlevoix maintained the rough water right up to the channel entrance. The channel itself was a snug fit for our 47 foot craft and we had to wait awhile for a bridge. Smaller craft crowded us a bit

requiring us to maneuver some and making the wait seem longer than it was.

Entering the harbor we made our customary fuel stop before docking, then into our slip. At this point we had each found our role on the crew and worked together easily. I checked us in and we decided to clean up for dinner. Jack knew of a place a short walk from our slip but they couldn't seat us promptly. Too hungry to wait, we found another place right across the street and enjoyed a fine dinner.

We had made it a practice to be in each port well before sundown, so after dinner we had time to walk around town a little. As it was time to do some laundry, I took a long walk to a local store and purchased some detergent. Jack, however, had a like thought. He decided to return to the boat and take advantage of the fine wash facilities at the harbor. He grabbed up each of our laundry bags and loaded the machines. Absent detergent however, Jack concluded that dish soap would probably do the job and put in a good amount. When I returned to the boat, Dave told me that Jack had already taken the clothes and started the wash. "How?" I inquired. "Jack used dish soap." replied Dave. I walked quickly to the Harbor's laundry room and easily found the machines Jack had selected. They were the two which had the viewing windows solid white with foam. It was so thick the clothes scarcely moved! I had to wait for the cycles to end, then ran 2 loads of rinse only.

There was a TV on in the Harbor lounge with weather reports. The prediction was pretty much the same nice weather but a good wind and a chop of 2's and 3's. After the clothes dried I folded, went back to the boat. Dave and I both called our wives, and then turned in. I made a few more notes for Dick, then read until I fell asleep.

#### **Days nine & ten --**

The next morning we arose really early. Why? At 5:45 AM, the Charlevoix Bridge would open on demand and we could avoid the annoying experience we had on the way in, waiting for the bridge to open.

It opens and in no time we are in Lake Michigan. Our sense of triumph however is short lived, as the seas and wind are again on our bow. As the seas build we dial in the course for Frankfort, set our diesels at their "happy speed" and establish the order of our helm duties. Other than the sea conditions, the leg was uneventful. I made sandwiches and they tasted great even though I had no idea what they were. The early start and having 3 helmsmen, virtually assured naps for each of us.



We hit Frankfort on the 3rd of July and much of the town was decked out in red, white and blue. The next morning a walk to the end of town revealed this day would be still another rough one. We conferred and decided to stay the 4th of July. The good news, we had a nice dinner together at a local bar and enjoyed the fireworks as wind driven wavelets rocked the boat in our slip. We all spoke to home and, though we didn't discuss it, it was clear that the next day, neither rain, nor sleet

#### **Day eleven --**

Today's stop would be Grand Haven. This harbor isn't too far from our home base & destination, Michigan City, IN, also known as "Mecca". Even though have I've been to Grand Haven many times, it's always a nice place to visit. As we pulled into the harbor and sought our usual fuel stop, we realized the evening had started and most of the places were closed. Jack, however, winter stores his boat at a marina there, and is one of their most prized customers. (translation: he spends a lot there.) A call from him and the marina kept their fuel station open until we arrived. Later, the marina owner, a Chris Craft fan, stopped by for a visit. Turns out he was familiar with the 47 Commander and we gave him a tour of the boat.

The town has a fabulous dancing waters nightly light show which is accompanied by music. The show is presented on a hillside on the opposite side of the channel and can be watched from one's boat or a bleacher. There is also a museum a few feet from the docks which has memorabilia from the 40's and 50's. It's small, but nice. Dave and I strolled into town for a beer at a tavern right across from the docks. The 2 beers

we had were the most expensive we had encountered the entire trip! We only had one then left to find a place for dinner. Jack joined us and just across the street we had a great dinner, actually our last one together.

We began to review our experiences, and, to a man, we had all enjoyed our time together. Even the weather driven extended stays were made pleasant by visiting the respective towns and joys we all derived from being at sea. That night, our last as a crew, it was hard to believe the time had passed so quickly. Tomorrow we would make the last part of our journey.

#### **Day twelve --**

We were up and away early, and during the morning had phone conversations with our loved ones to arrange for our pick-up. Dick and Patty would, of course, be there. We had already focused on making the most accurate projection of our arrival time.

As we left Grand Haven the seas were, once again, rough. In our home waters, Jack and I were not surprised at the ongoing presence of Lake Michigan wind and chop. Dave certainly noticed it. Thirty miles from Michigan City, the water smoothed considerably, almost welcoming us home. This was my home harbor, but as Jack seemed eager to bring us in, so I became the Harbor guide. Dave began to lay out lines and as we turned into the mouth of the Harbor we could see Dick and Patty ready to receive their new craft.

PATTY WAGON slid smoothly into her new slip and old friends were there to catch lines. Unlike the others, I would be only a short walk from this fine Commander, but I had already gotten acquainted with her. Over the next days and weeks Dick and Patty would entertain many visitors who brought well wishes and enjoyed boat tours.

**Follow-up:** If I count correctly, my friendship with Dick and Patty Morland passed the thirty year mark some time ago, and it remains one of my most treasured relationships. Dave, Jack, and I have stayed in touch, and I would be proud and pleased to go to sea with either of them at any time.