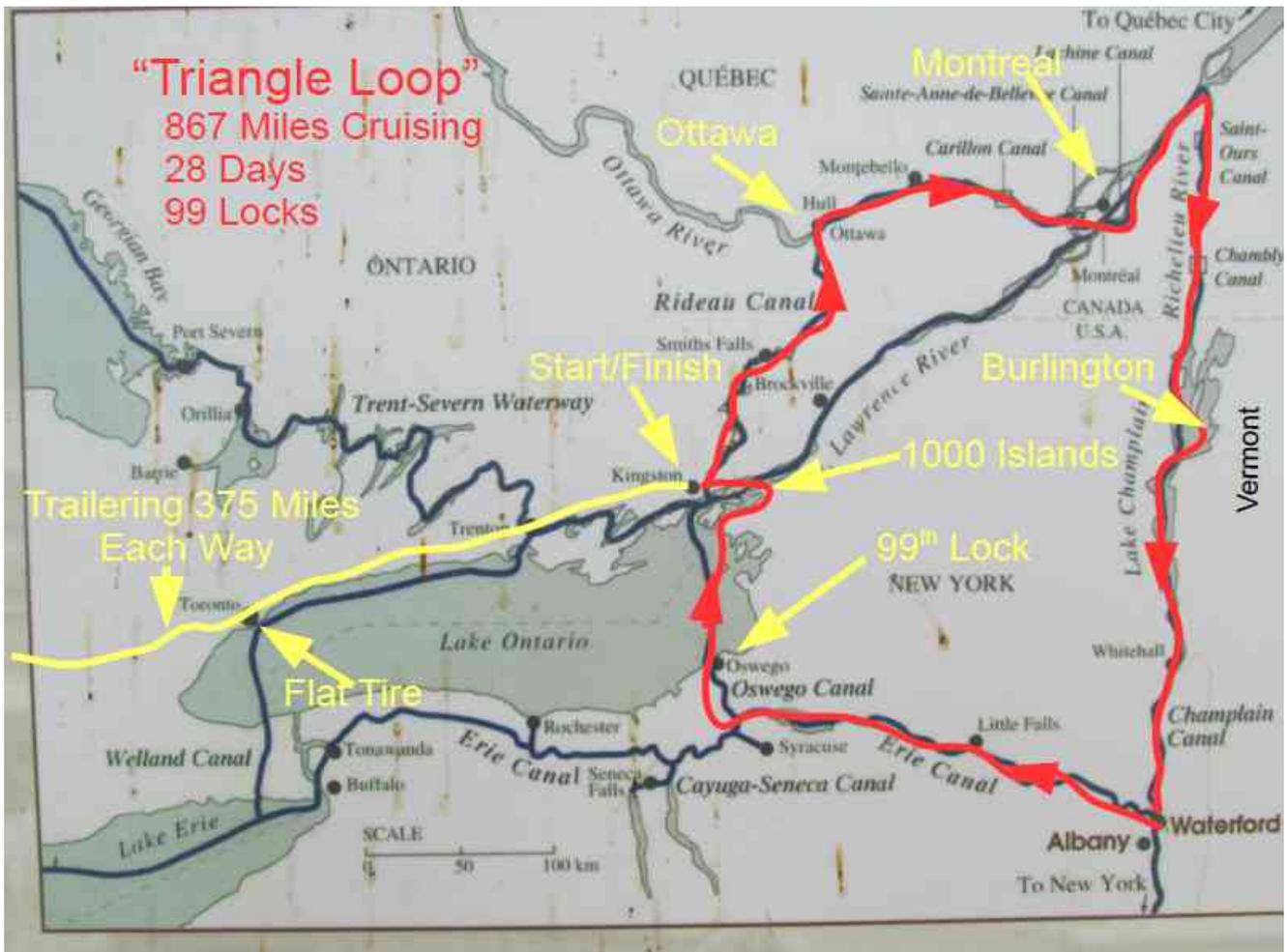


Rich and Cheryl Odendahl Take “Roam” on a Cruise through History on the Triangle Loop July/August 2016

We trailered our Ranger Tug “Roam” 375 miles from our condo in Michigan to a marina near Kingston, Ontario. Everything was going well until a trailer tire blew out in the express lanes on a section of Highway 401 near the Toronto International Airport. The freeway is 16 lanes wide in this area. Fortunately, the shoulder was wide and Rich has considerable experience changing trailer tires after eight previous flats towing Roam over 30,000 miles. We were back on the road in 16 minutes. While Rich had the tire replaced at a Canadian Tire store in Belleville, a kind couple volunteered to drive Cheryl on a provisioning trip to the grocery and liquor stores. We launched the boat at the Rideau Marina, stored the truck and trailer, and prepared for the upcoming cruise.



The first section of the Triangle Loop is 125 miles long and requires transiting 45 locks on the Rideau Canal; a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The canal was built after the War of 1812 when the British were concerned that the pesky Americans would block the St. Lawrence River and deny them access to the sea. Of course, that never happened, and today the canal is operated as a historical site by Parks Canada. All but two of the locks and swing bridges are hand operated. Groups of university students in green polo shirts grind winches to pull chains that open and close the valves and doors. They all speak fluent English and French, and they grind the winches with a smile. Most of the old lock-master's houses have been restored and many have been turned into small museums. Parks have been built around the locks where it's possible to spend the night tied to a dock.



Here's our procedure; Cheryll goes to the bow with the boat hook, gloves and her camera. Rich noses the boat up to one of the vertical black cables. Cheryll loops a line around the cable, cleats it and fends off the lock wall using the boat hook. Rich maneuvers the boat to a position where he can reach a cable near the stern, goes to the cockpit, loops a line around the cable and cleats it. Then he goes back in to shut off the engine and instruments. Sometimes we also had to help another boat raft next to us. Rich fends off the stern using a long-handled scrub brush. The lock tenders close the gates behind us and open the valves to raise or lower the water to the new level. After they open the opposite doors, Rich starts the engine, unties the stern, and drives the boat out after Cheryll unties the bow. We performed variations of this procedure in 99 locks. In the interest of full disclosure, the water levels were such that it was possible to have the doors open at both ends simultaneously in two of the 99 locks, so purists might count 97.





Pork chops from the grill in the cockpit waiting for the Jones Falls locks to open in the morning.



We spent a day and a half as tourists in the Capital City of Ottawa. Not only did we see this elaborate changing of the guard, but we enjoyed several buskers and a tour of the Royal Mint. Unlike the thief in this article, we did not get any free samples. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/09/21/royal-canadian-mint-employee-allegedly-smuggled-140000-worth-of-gold-in-his-butt/>

Cheryll's broken ankle has healed well enough that she was able to walk over five miles without painkillers, although it felt like it was cramping.



The Canadian Parliament building towers above the Ottawa River.



This is the last flight of eight adjoining locks at the end of the Rideau Canal. We arrived at 6:00 AM to be part of the first group of boats going down, but they decided to bring three groups of boats up first. We finally started down at 1:00 PM and didn't make it out into the Ottawa River until 2:30 PM. At each lock, all of the boats have to do a "dosey-doe" to exit each lock and then secure themselves in the next. There were over a dozen lock tenders here. All were working hard to facilitate the process.

The large, modern Carillon Lock on the Ottawa River was crowded with 19 boats on a Sunday afternoon. The local police conducted safety inspections on the captive audience during the ride down and passed out tickets to two boaters for insufficient numbers of life jackets and fire extinguishers.



We anchored out that evening in what seemed like a nice bay until the wakeboarders decided to join us. One group of drunks almost drifted into us apparently distracted by their French-Canadian passenger clad only in a mono-kini. Cheryl went to the bow with the boat hook to fend off, but forgot her camera in haste.



On the St. Lawrence River, we had to share two of the locks with large freighters. It took almost five hours to make it through the St. Catharine's Lock. For some reason, commercial traffic has priority.



Our slip at the Montreal Yacht Club; the best marina of the cruise.



Cheryll's favorite meal was this crepe at a sidewalk cafe in Montreal.



On our way out of town, we cruised past the industrial side of Montreal. At least there was a Molson Brewery; Mmmmm..... Beer!



After the Chambly Canal and clearing US Customs, we arrived in Burlington, Vermont.



Lake Champlain is spectacular!



We spent the night anchored below Fort Ticonderoga at the southern end of Lake Champlain. Our recollection of the history of the Revolutionary and French and Indian Wars was stretched to the limit.



Fort Edward is a sleepy town with an important claim to fame.



We like to depart early on warm summer days when there is little traffic, but fog can make the navigation challenging.



Sunrise on the Champlain Canal



The modern Erie Canal relies on damming several rivers, but the original canal had many more locks and here there used to be an aqueduct where the canal was on a bridge above the river. Today, the aqueduct is in ruins, but we're sure that building a bridge to support one body of water above another seemed like a good idea at the time.



Cheryll is getting excited to make it through the last lock. She says that she's "locked-out."



This is in Oswego, New York where the final lock leads into Lake Ontario.



Our last several days were spent in the 1000 Islands area. Boldt Castle (above) celebrates the gilded age of the 1920's when rich New York businessmen built summer cottages on the islands.



Cheryll is fantasizing that she's a rich princess on her private island.



Our last stop was at the downtown Confederation Basin Marina back in Kingston, Ontario. Others were arriving for a “Poker Run” powerboat race that filled the main section of the harbor. We had called for a reservation, but were told that the only spots available were at the “day-dock” shown above. The “day-dock” is normally used by small boats coming in for lunch or provisions. There are no utilities, but we could spend the night on a first-come-first-serve basis. We found the spot above and spent the afternoon touring the pleasant city. When we returned around 5:00 PM, the small boat pictured above had left, and a 38-foot Fountain racer-wanna-be was moving in. The finger docks are only 15 feet long and 20 feet apart, but he managed to wedge himself in; about six inches from Roam.

We went to dinner and returned to the sound of Roam's carbon monoxide detector alarm. After a brief investigation, we found that, contrary to marina rules, our neighbor had started his generator and the exhaust was aimed right into our cockpit. I explained the situation, and he turned off his generator. But then his wife started working on him. She wanted air-conditioning and refrigeration. He restarted the generator, and the alarm sounded a few minutes later. She suggested that we either move or tape off the vents on our boat so that they could continue to violate the no generator rule. The security guards were either unwilling or unable to make them shut off their generator. We felt trapped. It was dark, and there was no place to go without wedging ourselves into an even tighter spot. Half the people on the dock were falling-down drunk. I was unfamiliar with the area and how to get into other marinas. Besides, we had been there first; hours before this guy squeezed in next to Roam. So I called the fire department. They arrived and their personal CO alarms started sounding just standing on the dock. They went into our v-berth and measured over 300 ppm. If we had just gone to bed, we would likely have never awakened. Our neighbors were mad to be told to move or shut off their generator. They left fuming, both literally and figuratively. We spent a sleepless night wondering if one of their drunk friends would damage Roam or untie our lines.

We left at dawn and headed back along the narrow channel to the suburban Rideau Marina where our truck and trailer were stored.

There we loaded Roam onto the trailer and prepared for the trip home.



After a nap to make up for our sleepless night, we rode the bus into the city for the Tragically Hip “Welcome Home” concert. We couldn't get tickets to the sold-out event, but the Canadian Broadcast Corporation interrupted Olympic coverage to televise the concert live across the country. For those of us without tickets, they set up a giant TV screen in the town square where tens of thousands of fans crowded in to watch this major event. The picture above was taken hours before the concert began. The Tragically Hip are not big in the US, but they are an icon in Canada. We were surrounded by people singing along to songs that we had never heard, or recalled only vaguely. It was a splendid evening.

We returned to the marina on the clean, efficient, free bus and slept on the boat in the marina parking lot. Our drive home was without incident.

Apart from the flat tire and the near-death CO poisoning, we very much enjoyed this cruise through history. Cruising the Rideau Canal, visiting Ottawa, wandering Old Montreal and anchoring next to several forts brought back faded memories of American history. Several locals interrupted our cockpit happy hours to express concern about the upcoming elections and provide unsolicited input about one candidate in particular.

Stay tuned for more adventures!

Our world-wide trip reports are at:

<http://www.odendahls.com/>

The other adventures of Roam can be found at:

<http://odendahls.com/roam/>

