

Oriental NC  
Weather Station  

**93°F**  
 S @ 13mph  
 3:45pm  
 ▶ Weather Forecast  
 ▶ Weather Details  
 ▶ LIVE Wind Gauge



Tonight  
Sw Winds 15 - 20 Knots

It's Tuesday July 20, 2010

News From The Village Updated Almost Daily

Search TownDock

Sail & Power vessel  
yacht brokerage in  
Oriental. Click  
here for listings...



DEATON YACHT SALES

LIFE ON THE WATER  

**RIVER DUNES**  
 800.973.9565  
 riverdunes.com




Decan Grove  
MARINA  
ON THE HARBOUR  
Oriental

Whittaker Pointe  

 Discover your  
boat's new home in  
Oriental....

**ST. BARTS  
YACHTS**  
 In the heart of the  
village at Oriental  
Harbor Marina - we  
can help you find  
the right sail or  
power vessel

**Triton Yachts**  
Oriental, NC  
  
 A yacht brokerage run  
by experienced sailors  
click here



Dogs in Oriental  
agree...

## THE SHIPPING NEWS

*Lots of boats come to Oriental, some tie up at the Town Dock for a night or two, others drop anchor in the harbor for a while. If you've spent any time on the water you know that every boat has a story. The Shipping News on TownDock.net brings you the stories of the boats that have visited recently.*

### Dalamar

*A Tiny Boat Tackles the Great Loop  
July 20, 2010*

1 2 [next page >](#)

**F**or a man from the cornfields of Illinois with little boating experience and a tiny boat, Buzz Gentes sure has come a long way. Buzz, traveling aboard his 15-foot sailboat "Dalamar", is 3,500 miles into a hoped-for 6,000 mile trek that stretches from the mid-West rivers to the Atlantic seaboard.



Dalamar docked at Oriental Harbor Marina

It all started in the years before Buzz retired, when, looking ahead to his golden years, he feared "sitting on a bar stool telling stories about the past" – and ten years later, "sitting on that same bar stool telling the same stories".

- Home
- What's Happening
- Classified Ads
- Local Weather
- Marine Weather
- Hurricane Center
- Web Cams:
- HarborCam
- RiverCam
- MarkerCam
- PecanCam
- AnchorageCam
- Columns:
- The Shipping News
- Ask Salty
- Drawing The Town
- Pet Of The Month
- Community:
- Farmers' Market
- Youth Sailing School
- Etc:
- On The Cover
- Dock Quotes
- "NewsExtra" Archives
- About Oriental
- About TownDock.net

### Recent Posts:

- July 2010 - Dalamar
- July 2010 - Schooner "Winfield Lash"
- June 2010 - Jeanie B
- June 2010 - NC Boat To Count Dolphins In Oily Gulf
- June 2010 - Marking Time in "Zingara"
- May 2010 - Living the Dash



Buzz Gentes

So Buzz got busy. Three years before he quit his job working as a supervisor in the automotive industry, he began planning his post-career life. Instead of being trapped behind a glass of beer or taking the usual retirement RV trip, he decided he would tackle the Great Loop.

The Great Loop is a waterway circumnavigation of the East Coast encompassing the mid-West river system, the Atlantic coast and the Great Lakes. While most mariners tackle the Loop with 30 to 40-foot boats, Buzz began looking for a much smaller vessel.



The Great Loop: Buzz with a flag showing his intended route. The flag also acts as his wind gauge. When it "flutters straight", he reckons the wind is blowing at 10 knots. At 15 knots, the flag "starts poppin".

Trouble is, Buzz knew nothing about boats. In fact, aside from an inflatable boat, he'd never even owned one.

So he started reading – magazines, online articles, anything to help him learn what sort of boat he'd need.

Over time, he came to an understanding of what he wanted. The vessel he sought had to be small because he couldn't "count on being bailed out if things went wrong." He also wanted something he could "run up on the bank if needed." Money, too, mattered. His boat couldn't be too expensive so that "I could sink and it wouldn't put a dent in my retirement."

In the end, Buzz ordered a new 2009 West Wight Potter 15. At 15 feet and under 500 pounds dry weight, the Potter 15 was small for the undertaking Buzz had in mind. But it was capable. One Potter sailed from England to Sweden across a wintry North Sea – another from California to Hawaii.



While Buzz prefers to stay in marinas, he has equipped "Dalamar" for anchoring out. Two Bruce anchors hang from the bow in twin anchor holders built from schedule 80 PVC pipe. Each anchor is attached to 150 feet of nylon anchor rode coiled on T-shaped PVC cleats. The third, Danforth anchor, lends holding power as required.



While Dalamar sports a pair of aluminum oars, Buzz says he really only keeps them on board should both his engines fail at the same time. So far, he reports rowing very little.

Oriental NC  
Weather Station  
93°F  
S @ 13mph  
3:45pm  
Weather Forecast  
Weather Details  
LIVE Wind Gauge

Tonight  
Sw Winds 15 - 20 Knots

It's Tuesday July 20, 2010

News From The Village Updated Almost Daily

Search TownDock



**Tarpon  
Tournament**  
July 30 - Aug 1, 2010  
  
\$22,000 in prizes

**Carol Wright**  
Click here to  
search all area  
real estate  
listings

**ORIENTAL  
YACHT  
SALES**  
  
NEW  
BOATING  
HORIZONS

**Whittaker Point**  
Boat Slips  
for Sale & Lease in  
Oriental NC

**Triton Yachts**  
Oriental, NC  
  
Yacht hauling with state  
of the art equipment.  
We make difficult hauls  
easy. [click here](#)

**LIFE ON THE WATER**  
**RIVER DUNES**  
800.975.9565  
  
riverdunes.com

## THE SHIPPING NEWS

*Lots of boats come to Oriental, some tie up at the Town Dock for a night or two, others drop anchor in the harbor for a while. If you've spent any time on the water you know that every boat has a story. The Shipping News on TownDock.net brings you the stories of the boats that have visited recently.*

### Dalamar

*A Tiny Boat Tackles the Great Loop  
July 20, 2010*

[← previous page](#) | 1 2

The boat shipped from the manufacturer in June 2009. Buzz retired on August 31. On October 4, he "hit the water on the Illinois river outside Peoria" and headed toward the Gulf of Mexico. The river waters swept him smoothly south. But they didn't prepare him for what lay ahead.

Eight months later, having traveled down the Mississippi River, through the Tennessee-Tombigbee waterway, and across Florida, he arrived in Oriental. Recalling the first 3,500 miles of his voyage, Buzz says it was like nothing he'd had in mind.

Much of it has to do with the size of his boat. At 15 feet, the Dalamar is considered small for the Great Loop voyage. When asked what challenges he's faced on his voyage, he qualifies most of his answers by saying "for the boat the boat I'm in....."



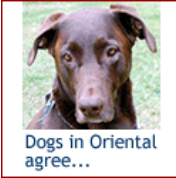
Buzz stretching out belowdecks – just.....

First there was the range of marine environments he's encountered. Since his flat water start, he's encountered "everything from rivers and lakes, sounds and bays to floating docks, fixed docks and marinas". While bucking tides in east coast estuaries have made for slow going, it's the man made environments that have proven most dangerous. At a marina in Beaufort, North Carolina, he fell overboard. The only thing he hasn't encountered, he jokes, are "waterfalls and 30-foot Australian crocodiles."

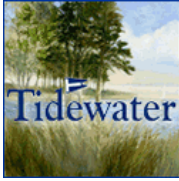
Home  
What's Happening  
Classified Ads  
Local Weather  
Marine Weather  
Hurricane Center  
Web Cams:  
HarborCam  
RiverCam  
MarkerCam  
PecanCam  
AnchorageCam  
Columns:  
The Shipping News  
Ask Salty  
Drawing The Town  
Pet Of The Month  
Community:  
Farmers' Market  
Youth Sailing School  
Etc:  
On The Cover  
Dock Quotes  
"NewsExtra" Archives  
About Oriental  
About TownDock.net

### Recent Posts:

- July 2010 - Dalamar
- July 2010 - Schooner "Winfield Lash"
- June 2010 - Jeanie B
- June 2010 - NC Boat To Count Dolphins In Oily Gulf
- June 2010 - Marking Time in "Zingara"
- May 2010 - Living the Dash



Dogs in Oriental agree...



Dalamar with some large neighbors

Then there are the elements. Of all the things things he anticipated struggling with on his trip, the weather is the one Buzz underestimated most. High winds and waves that cause discomfort to boaters in larger vessels can keep Dalamar in port. Though Dalamar sports a shade awning, which Buzz erects in marinas, underway, in windy conditions, it “acts like a sail”, overpowering the vessel’s small engines. So it is folded down and Buzz has to steer exposed to the wind, rain and sun.

Which is ironic. Dalamar was originally rigged as a sailboat.

When Buzz bought his vessel, she sported a mast and sails. But he left the sailing rig at home “because sailing looked like a lot of work.” In lieu of wind power, he settled for two, 2-horsepower outboard motors. This tandem arrangement allows him to quickly fire up the second motor should the first fail. Under most conditions, he only uses one engine at a time. Traveling at hull speed of 5 knots, he can travel from 150 to 200 miles on 6 gallons of gas. In unfavorable conditions, such as heading into a strong wind, he uses both engines at the same time.



Dalamar’s twin air-cooled outboards. Of everything aboard his vessel, the outboards’ sheer pins are what fail most. Sheer pins are sacrificial pins mounted on the propeller. They are designed to

fail under extreme loads to protect the engine from damage. So far, Buzz has broken 6 of them.

Gradually, Buzz's academic knowledge of boating, the things he'd learned by reading, were replaced by on-water experience. With so little prior experience, he describes his first 1500 miles of his voyage as "just trying to survive" – learning to read his charts and stay out of trouble.

Over time, though, the focus of his voyage changed. As he became comfortable navigating his new world of water, shoals and charts, his views on time changed. In the world he left, Buzz says, his days were "time driven". That is, he had to be at certain places at certain times doing certain things. In his new voyaging world, that's changed. The Dalamar's small size has forced him to reconsider notions of time. Some windy days, the engine's are too small to drive the small vessel into the wind. Others, the waves are too large for comfortable passage. Over time, these limitations have taught Buzz to spend days individually, as they come, even if that means waiting in port until conditions improve.

In the end, though, putting up with the hardships of voyaging in his diminutive vessel helped Buzz avoid what he fears most.

"The scariest thing isn't sinking a 15-foot boat," he says. "It's saying, at age 72, 'I wish had done so-and-so and now it's too late to do it. I can't do it anymore.'" Buzz is 62.

Still, sinking has crossed Buzz's mind. It's had a direct bearing on his vessel's name.

On the side of Dalamar's cabin house, just aft the porthole, is a photo of a young girl snuggled up next to a Labrador retriever. The dog's name is Dalamar, the girl's Jasmine.



Dalamar and Jasmine

Jasmine is Buzz's granddaughter.

Buzz says people often ask why he named the boat after the dog, not his granddaughter. If the boat sinks with his granddaughter's name on it, says Buzz, it's something she would have to live with for the rest of her life. However, if he sinks in a boat named after a black lab, it would be no big deal because "the dog can handle it....".

So what's it been like for a boater with so little experience to just pull up stakes and go cruising? Buzz says he's glad he tackled the project before he fully understood the

subject. He notes that if he'd taken all the courses others rely on to learn about boating, chances are good he would have never left port. "Do things now" he counsels, adding that folks over age 55 should be especially vigilant to act "while they still have their health."



After his week in Oriental, Buzz hopes to follow the ICW north, transit the Erie Canal and arrive at Lake Ontario by the first week of October. There he plans to stop for the season, noting, in allusion to the lake's winter storms, that "there are bigger things on the bottom of that lake than my boat." The following spring, he hopes to resume his Great Loop trip, tying the knot on his voyage in Peoria some time in 2011.

Though he won't say what trip he has in mind after that, one thing's for sure. Should he take a well-earned rest on a bar stool he'll have plenty of fresh stories to tell – 'til the traveling bug strikes again.

[← previous page](#) | [1](#) [2](#)

[✉ EMAIL THIS STORY](#) | [BACK TO TOP](#)

[Home](#) [What's Happening](#) [Classified Ads](#) [Local Weather](#) [Marine Weather](#) [Hurricane Center](#)  
[The Shipping News](#) [Ask Salty](#) [Drawing The Town](#) [Pet Of The Month](#)  
[On The Cover](#) [Dock Quotes](#) ["NewsExtra" Archives](#) [About Oriental](#) [About TownDock.net](#)

Copyright ©2010 TownDock.net | All Rights Reserved