

Cold Weather Delivery

February 3, 2009

By Jeff Merrill

With the month of December comes many traditions like the ones you celebrate during the holiday season and the ones we as Nordhavn salesmen carry out - like jockeying our boats around - prior to the end of the calendar year.

The Nordhavn Southwest sales office is our company's largest, with 8 salesmen on staff. We're a team and each steps up to help another out...whether it be covering at a boat show or standing in to host an appointment. The nature of the boating business often creates scheduling challenges; it's difficult to make firm plans with so many moving parts like boat repairs, weather, personal schedules, etc. (Probably sounds just like your life, right?)



[Snow on Lake Union](#)

Such a conflict occurred last month with my colleague, Gerry Edwards. Gerry and I were sharing a client and Gerry flew up to Seattle in late November to attend the sea trial and survey with Brandy and Anne Smith who had an accepted offer on the Nordhavn 55 "Fitz Us". At the same time, Gerry was wrapping up the commissioning and delivery of a brand new Nordhavn 68 that he had sold. He'd promised the owner he would crew on the maiden voyage from Dana Point, CA to Ixtapa, Mexico - in the hopes of arriving in time for the new owner to

celebrate Christmas aboard.

So Gerry went south on the 68 and I flew north to close the 55 deal and help the Smiths sail their new 55 from Lake Union to Gig Harbor. Gerry got sunshine and I got snow and we both got to do what we love, spend time underway on Nordhavns.



[Snow stairs](#)



[Tim Hess](#)

I arrived in Seattle to find about 6 inches of fresh snow on the Nordhavn sales docks in Lake Union. We fired up the generator and put the air conditioning into reverse cycle heat mode and I started training on pre-departure routines with Brandy. A small coolant leak had been noted during the survey (a gasket on the turbo flange). In the process of helping Brandy prepare for ownership with spare parts and other necessities I realized that the Deere main engine required a special kind of

coolant and talked to the great folks at Cascade Engine Center who sell us our Deere and Yanmar engines. Sales manager Greg Light introduced me to Tim Hess, the president and owner of Cascade, and they generously offered to provide us a couple gallons of their "Cool-Gard" with none other than a personal delivery from Tim, in the cold winter weather...talk about service.

Here's one of the top engine executives in the country, making a house call in the snow – all in the holiday spirit of caring and giving. (Thanks again Tim!)

Brandy's father, Jerry Smith, was on board for all of our preparations and I have to tell you I already miss him. He is a great guy! (A classic "old salt" which I say in the most complimentary way). We immediately were teasing and kidding each other as we prepared for a "quick" excursion to the fuel docks. (Jerry has done extensive long range cruising on sailboats over the years and even brought his weathered copy of Skene's 'Elements of Yacht Design' which looked like a first edition that Jerry probably bought when it first came out – it had that wonderful worn and well used look to it and I'm sure he can quote from it at will...but ask him at your own risk!)



**Tim, Jerry, Brandy Anne
in saloon**



Skenes and Jerry

We left Chandler's Cove and soon approached the Morrison's North Star Marine Fuel Dock on Lake Union where Brandy had made advance arrangements to take on about 2,000 gallons of diesel. All I could see was frosting on the dock – a creamy layer that obscured where the cleats were supposed to be...then, after clearing some room around the cleats it was time to deal with the half-frozen mooring lines, which felt more like dealing with steel cable and didn't quite bend around the horns very easily. We took on over 1,600 gallons at \$1.66 per gallon (not counting sales tax). Based on my past large fueling excursion (over six months ago) this was like stepping back in time to a simpler, more friendly world from the long ago past. We completed our errand and returned to base after dark where we all agreed that a bowl of chowder from Duke's was the right way to beat the chill and warm ourselves up. We outlined our trip for the morning – speed trials on Lake Washington, then through the locks and down the sound to Gig...while the snow continued to fall outside.

That evening I emailed Gerry Edwards to give him an update, knowing that his email access might be limited at sea. He had one of those automatic replies that was something like: "Sorry I can't get right to your email. I'll be out of the office until January 5th. I'm delivering a Nordhavn 68 to Mexico. It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it." Yes, you and me both! But you're probably wearing shorts and a t-shirt and I have about five layers of sweaters and jackets.



Morrison's Fuel dock



[Group photo in cockpit – going to Gig](#)

Friday, December 19th the sun came out, but the temperature was still in the 30s. We first went to Lake Washington to do some speed and fuel burn runs with our fully laden steed. Cascade came to the rescue again as we got one of their top techs to help us program the Murphy gauge so we could monitor fuel burn, coolant temp, digital rpms and percent load. On this trip we were joined by Jerry's wife/Brandy's mom Maxine and Brandy and Anne's good friends, Jim and Trish Yeates for the day trip home. The fuel burn numbers and percent load were better with the heavier boat, but we're still working on a solution to get a more efficient propeller package for Brandy.

After waiting for the Fremont bridge and locking through at Crittenden we got to cut loose and power down the Sound. We were welcomed with a crisp, clear day, Mt. Rainier in the background (looking like a giant white mound of sugar) and a relatively calm passage. Brandy took advantage of our full fuel load to do some manual fuel burn measurements on the Nordhavn proprietary fuel "gallon consumption" tank at various rpms and I logged all of the data into an Excel spread sheet which we used to compare with the digital readings we recorded earlier in the day (and to cross reference with the numbers achieved during the seatrial when the boat was lightly loaded). Brandy quickly became a master of the valves and with stop watch in hand he got very good readings which will be quite useful for future trip planning.



[Anne](#)



[Brandy in engine room](#)

Once we were settled and into our routine I took it upon myself to chip out the ice on the Portuguese bridge and along the starboard side deck. Not really necessary (although I didn't want anyone to slip getting around or handling lines when we arrived at the dock), but just something to keep a warm blooded boy amused, not anything I'm that familiar with. We did hear a loud banging noise at one point and Jim discovered that the davit hook had come loose – so out came the controls and we took out the slack – always some new sounds on a new boat, but that one was particularly loud!

Anne interrupted me for a lunch call (why am I always hungry on a boat?) and we had several hours of smooth running before we turned the corner and rolled into Gig Harbor. We pulled in to the dock about 16:40 having run all told about 44 miles in 6 hours. We quickly tied up the boat, offloaded gear and then disbanded into several vehicles going in different directions. Brandy and Jerry dropped me off at SeaTac so I could catch my flight home (had I missed my flight I would have been stuck for at least a day) and before I knew it I was reading Clive Cussler in the airplane heading south. The snow and cold weather greatly improved my Christmas mood and I smiled when I thought about how much fun Brandy and Anne are going to have with their 55, renamed “Riptide”.



[Jerry Jeff and Brandy](#)

Meanwhile, Gerry made it safely to Ixtapa December 26th and stayed with the owner and his family for a couple of days to do some training and relax while enjoying 80 degree “winter weather”. So with arrivals and departures checked off, we were happy to go back to celebrating the holidays with our families and return the duty of holiday special deliveries back to the man in the red and white suit with the magic sleigh.



[Arrival Gig](#)

Special thanks to Anne Smith for many of the photos!

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