Log of the GINIK II

out of Holland, Michigan

Chicago to Mackinac Race 1969

GINIK II out of Holland, Michigan

Owner and skipper

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Don Stoutjesdyk - Grandville, Michigan
Dan Richmond - Grandville, Michigan
Casey Oegema - Grandville, Michigan
Lee De Voss - Grand Rapids, Michigan
Robert Saur - Chicago, Illinois

Introduction

The boat is the Ginik II, a beautiful 34 foot Islander sloop owned and skippered by Gene Davidson of Grandville. The time is the middle of July 1969 and the quest is the running of the 62nd annual Chicago to Mackinac yacht race.

It all began a year ago when stories of this race were told and retold about the docks in Holland, and the newspaper accounts tell of the challenge to fresh water sailors in this, one of the longest fresh water races in the world.

During the long winter months, plans are formulated, special sails are ordered, rules and regulations are read and studied for the proper equipment to have on board. Safety is foremost of importance to the sailors so the proper charts, safety harness for each man, life raft, radio, extra life lines, jackets and all the many required items are gathered together and installed aboard the Ginik II.

Expectation of the coming race has played a great roll in our lives as time for departure draws near. Most of us find it hard to sleep, with thoughts of anticipation filling our minds both night and day.

Destination - Chicago, Illinois

Depart Holland Harbor 2020

True course 2250

Speed 8 m.p.h. using motor and main sail

Shortly before dark on the evening of 9 July the Ginik II clears the pier heads at Holland and sets course for Chicago.

The night is warm and the Lake is smooth and glassy, and we find we must motor for lack of wind.

Fog has dimmed the sharp line of the horizon and the great sand dunes loom as a rolling black line behind us, broken only by the bright red harbor lights.

The boat is soon shipshape with all items in their proper places and the crew relaxes with conversation of the race to come and the events of the day.

Daylight is now fading and the fog is closing in. High pink clouds are casting their reflection on the water blending the sky and sea into one. A few bright lights are still visible along the shore behind us but the rest of our world is fast changing into an ever darkening blanket of fog and night.

2200 - Course 225^o

Speed 8 m.p.h.

We are now all alone in the darkness of the night. All off shore pleasure craft have turned back to port, shore lights are gone, stars are clouded over and the fog has become much heavier. We rely on our compass and direction finder for navigation and settle down for a long night running by motor. Some of the crew turn in for sleep while the rest stand watch.

0300 - Course 230°

Speed 8 m.p.h.

Using motor. No wind in the sail. Watch is changed - Dan Richmond and Lee DeVoss on deck.

0500 - Course 230°

Motoring at a speed of 8 m.p.h.

Morning breaks with heavy fog still all around us. Without notice the Ramahojo, another sailing yacht out of Muskegon appears out of the thick wall of fog and is only a matter of a few yards from us when two sleepy helmsmen suddenly alter course to avoid each other, wish each other good morning and the Ramahojo slips away as a ghost into the fog just as fast as she had appeared.

0700 - Course 240° - Speed 8 m.p.h.

83 miles out of Holland. Heavy fog. Visability 1 mile.

0735 - Course 220° - Speed 8 m.p.h.

North Chicago water crib on our port beam. We are 88 miles out of Holland. Fog still heavy.

0821 - Change course to 200° - Speed 8 m.p.h.

Calm surface in heavy fog - 94.7 miles from Holland.

0907 - Pass Chicago water intake 4 mile crib on our port side.

Fog is heavy with visability about 100 yards

Course 200° - Speed 8 m.p.h.

Chicago radio beacon dead ahead.

0930 - Course 200° - Speed slowed to 6 m.p.h. as fog is very heavy. We are very close to Chicago. We have passed several aids to navigation and met several boats coming out of Chicago, but because of the fog we still do not see the City.

Our first view of the City is the most unusual I have ever seen.

The top of the Chicago sky line comes into view with the entire shore line covered with a heavy blanket of fog. The City is like a medieval fortress springing up out of a pit of rolling fog and smoke. The mystic moors of England couldn't have presented a more unusual picture.

and a whole new world unfolds. Along the shore the buildings of commerce and finance stand as overpowering evidence of the importance of this midwest metropolis to the commercial life-blood of America. In the harbor itself is the greatest assortment of ships and boats that can be seen anywhere on the Great Lakes. From giant ocean freighters to the smallest of pleasure boats, the picture is complete.

We are soon docked at the Chicago Yacht Club and here we find the cream of the Great Lakes sailing fleet. The race has attracted the largest and the finest in pleasure and racing boats on the Great Lakes ... famous names such as Norsaga, Hilaria, Gypsi, Flying Buffalo, Windigo, and Bikini, along with many others that warm the hearts of sailors at the mention of their names.

The mood at the Chicago Yacht Club is festive, exciting, and colorful. Old friends meet from all over the Great Lakes as well as the Atlantic and Florida Coasts. The boats are polished, cleaned, and decorated with flags of all types. Crews bring aboard supplies and check equipment. Stories of past races are freely exchanged and ideas for sailing this one are many and varied.

The crews go ashore for a night on the town, and the town's people come to the Yacht Club to look over the boats. Power boats ride back and forth past the Yacht Club and their passengers eat their hearts out at the beauty of the sailers and sense the excitement of the hour.

All about the dock area is color. The boats themselves show the loving touches of their owners, with bright sails, life preservers, flags, and trimmings of all sorts beautifully done and attracting the efforts of artists that line the lawns along the shore. The people too are most interesting. The crews of many boats dress in outstanding uniforms -- navy coats with orange pants, bright green pants with white shirts, and caps that stagger the imagination. Then there are the ladies that promenade the docks. It seems that the most lovely and colorfully dressed are on hand to wish their men well.

The formal dinner on Friday is one of the highlights of the event. Here the Commanders of the Coast Guard vessels that will accompany the sailing fleet speak of safety and sportsmanship. It was pointed out that in the 62 year history of this race no boat or man has ever been lost. This great history of sportsmanship, safety, and competitive spirit must stand as a beacon in the annals of Great Lakes sailing history, and speaks highly of the quality of men that sail each year.

After dinner, the party goes on into the night, while a few skippers make last minute repairs to their boats.

Saturday, 12 July dawns with a clear sky and a warm sun. Chicago shakes itself loose from the night slowly as the sun climbs and reflects on the windows of the tall shapely apartment buildings along the water front.

Life on the docks and boats also begins slowly, but by 0700 one can smell any type of breakfast that would suit his fancy, with all of them really inviting to hungry crews. Some eat ashore and some on board.

Now the mood of the docks has changed. The party is over and

the day for racing has come. The tempo of activity has increased as crews and skippers hurry here and there completing last minute preparations. Phone calls are received and made — telegrams are received and sent — and the public address system on the dock has a ring of urgency as each announcement or message is sent out.

Ships' crews break out sail bags and check lines, rigging, supplies, water tanks, fuel tanks, ice, and a hundred other items. One by one the boats start slipping away from the docks. The smallest boats will start first and they will want to check the wind and waves before starting time.

Beginning at 1300, over 206 boats divided into 8 sections will start, by section, from a line just outside the breakwater. They all have been measured, rated, and given a handicap, and will run against each other and against the clock. Everyone will have a chance to win with corrected time, but the crew that makes the smallest number of errors and does the best sailing job will win.

Aboard the Ginik II as she leaves the dock this morning are owner Gene Davidson, Crewmen Don Stoutjesdyk, Dan Richmond, and yours truly Casey Oegema, all of Grandville, Lee DeVoss of Grand Rapids, and Robert Saur of Chicago. Lee DeVoss is the only one of us who has sailed this race before and his knowledge of boat handling is most valuable to us. Gene Davidson has taken advance courses in navigating and seamanship and will skipper the boat. Don Stoutjesdyk and Bob Saur will handle the foredeck and major part of sail changes, and I will spend a great deal of time on the helm and keeping the log.

One important contribution to our crew is Dan Richmond, our cook. We think he's the best in the fleet. He is also our official

photographer, adviser, sail handler, and story teller. All in all a great sailor behind his newly trimmed beard.

Bob Saur also owns his own sail boat and his talent as sail handler is most welcome. His home is Chicago and he is employed as a consulting engineer at the University of Chicago. His enthusiasm for sailing, singing, and story telling proved most welcome on the trip.

Don is one of the greatest foredeck men in the fleet. No matter how the boat is sailing, his trimming, footwork, and handling of the wisker pole and sail is a sheer work of art.

THE RACE TO MACKINAC .12 July 1969

1230 The Ginik II clears the pier head and out to the area of the starting line. Our division of 24 boats will start at 1330 and our job for now is to be in the right place at the right time—no sooner—no later.

We run up our mainsail and set the light air Genoa--a one to two foot sea is running and the wind is light.

At precisely 1300 the first group is off. At 1315 the second group and at 1330 we are on the line and second across, as the wind fills our sails moving us north to Mackinac, 330 miles ahead, provided one follows the rhumb line.

Course 040° Speed 4 m.p.h.

For 30 minutes we sail with light air Genoa and mainsail, then as we move away from the shore, the wind shifts behind us and we run up our large red and white spinnaker.

1.400 Course 040° Speed 5 m.p.h. Set spinnaker

Ahead and behind us we see over a hundred spinnakers break out in full color. These huge sails are also a product of the artistic imagination of the skippers of each boat. I see no two alike--brilliant colors of red, yellow, blue, lavender, green and all the colors of the rainbow, highlighted by the bright noonday sun. Some are solicted color and some stripes. One is all white with a large eye across the front, much like the C.B.S. eye on TV. This magnificent spectacle of moving color is too large to catch on a single picture and one that we will long remember.

1480 Pass north water intake crib. Struck by high wind

Within the next hour the picture has changed. A storm squall has moved in swiftly and many boats ahead of us are being knocked over by the rushing of strong wind. Some are having trouble bringing in their spinnakers and they are laying way over. One skipper has let his spinnaker sheets go and this large sail is flying straight out from the top of the mast. The sky is now dark, the wind is strong, and the fleet is running fast before it.

1500 As fast as the storm has come up, it now passes and the fast moving fleet is now becalmed. All around us, large sails hang limp with nothing to fill them. Our driving force is now gone and crews try everything to catch what little breeze there may be. Sail changes happen all over the place in a frantic effort to get moving.

1600 An hour passes and the wind is now picking up. As evening settles over the Lake the boats are moving and separating in different directions. Some skippers will follow the Wisconsin shore, some the

By this time the large boats Norsaga and Windigo have passed

Michigan shore and some will run the rhumb line. Each skipper knows

his boat and will sail on the tack that moves him best.

through the fleet. The beauty of their large sails turns the head of all in admiration.

1920 Course 040° Speed 6.8 m.p.h.

19.8 miles from starting line.

Wind picking up.

The big picture now changes with night settling over the scattering fleet. Running lights appear all across the horizon. The wind has freshened and we are running well. The Ginik II sails well to weather and we pass 5 or 6 boats during the night.

2040 26 miles out - change course to 055° - wind from N.W.

2344 Change course to 0450

Speed 5 - 6 m.p.h.

As the wind shifts, ghost like sails draw close to each other, run side by side for a time and then move off on different tacks, each trying to gain the best speed on each shift of the wind.

Large lake and ocean freighters come and go. Their lights and their impressive size draw attention and we are mindful of the ever increasing amount of freight and raw material that is moving on our Great Lakes.

0300 Change course to 030°

Are now 54.2 miles from start.

The lights of Chicago illuminate the sky in the southwest. We are able to take a visual bearing on the lights atop the new John Hancock Building even though we are over 55 miles out.

0355 Change course to 0630

58.6 miles from start.

Morning of the next day finds the fleet widely scattered. We can see 7 or 8 boats around us and 8 to 10 more if we use binoculars. The wind picks up again and we are moving well. We log 22 miles in

less than 4 hours.

The Coast Guard is doing an excellent job of keeping track of the fleet. Two large ice breakers and one seaplane keep a regular check of each boat in the race.

0625 69.7 miles out - Begin tack west - Course 310°

0727 Fix due west of Holland - Course 3100 - 74.6 miles out.

0747 Change to course 0650

0755 Wind shifting - course 055°

The morning unfolds into a beautiful warm summer day. By 0855 the wind has become very light and at times we are moving very slowly. Our position is now due west of Port Sheldon and with little wind in our sails we are experiencing the beginning of a pattern that will frustrate us for most of the next 20 hours.

Dan has made a great breakfast this morning and the crew has many compliments for him and his efforts.

From 0930 to 1000 we move along with the wind out of the northeast. We feel great after a good breakfast, with a good wind, a clear clean sky, and smooth sea. The Lord has indeed made this day a great day to be alive.

1005 - wind letting down - speed 2 - 3 m.p.h.

Course 360° at 87.9 miles from start.

1104 Course 310° - 2.5 - 3 m.p.h.

Have little wind and smooth surface.

1200 Change to course 0400 - wind dropped off. 1 - 2 m.p.h. forward motion. Very light air - flopping north and west.

1015 to 1300 The wind has slowed and almost stopped. During one of those hours we move only 2 miles. At 1330 the wind is picking up slowly and we are moving nicely at 5 knots. The wind has shifted to the northwest and with it we have a great afternoon of sailing. As

we pass Muskegon and the White Lake area we see very little of the sailing fleet. By this time they are strung out in all directions, from close in on the Michigan sand dunes to the shore of Wisconsin.

1700 Course 030° - 112 miles from start.

We have a large lake freighter alongside, the Coast Guard ice breaker ahead, and four sailers behind us. Over on the horizon the sand dunes rise and fall in endless waves as far as the eye can see.

Our world around the Ginik II is an ever changing big picture.

Large ships come and go. Some move silently and some can be heard a long way off with their powerful engines throbbing as they plow through the calm water.

As daylight fades into the night, the beauty of the setting sun is too great to put into words. Colors dance in the sky as cloud formations reflect the passing sun, and the light blue-green of the waves first reflect these colors and then fall into a grey black of night.

The warmth of the day is also gone and those who stand the first watch will wear sweat shirts and jackets. The dampness that is ever present on the night air descends quickly and the decks are wet with dew.

2200 We are becalmed. Our general course is 3450 - 114.5 miles from start - trying to maintain steerage.

By this time our world is dark. The off-duty watch is asleep below and cabin lights are out. Fog hangs on the horizon and lights of far off cities reflect in an ever changing pattern that can hypnotize, should you take the time to stop and drink in the beauty of this--the many moods of the night. I take the tiller, Gene curls up in his sleeping bag on deck and Don drops down into the quarter berth below as the wind has now left us.

As each hour of the night passes, the notations in the log all reflect the fact that the wind and we are moving very slowly.

- 2230 We are becalmed.
- 2400 Making just enough headway to maintain steerage.

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- 0130 Making no headway. Several freighters pass astern.
- 0400 Still calm--steerage gone.
- 0520 Set spinnaker in light breeze. Make only 2 knots.
- O600 Spinnaker falls for lack of wind--set light staysail and move slowly. Course 345°.
- 0800, 1000, and 1200 The story is all the same--no wind and little forward motion.
- 1400 The day is hot, the lake glassy, the sky cloudless, and where oh where is the wind?
- 1415 We pass Little Point Sable slowly and Lake Michigan is relentless in showing us her calm nature.

With no wind to push us and our morale quite low, Gene decides it's time for a real field day. Out come the scrub brushes, cleaning equipment and buckets, and the Ginik II is cleaned from bow pulpit to transom. T-shirts, shorts, socks and jeans are also scrubbed, and by 1430 laundry is drying on all the life lines and we look like a floating backyard on Monday morning.

We spend all this day and well into the night sailing between Big Point Sable and Frankfort.

- 1600 Course 0050 hot smooth slow no wind.
- 1625 160.2 miles from Chicago, due west of Ludington.
- 2200 Course 0200 184.9 miles out from start Manistee light off starboard bow.

By this time we are moving better but the wind comes and goes.

We see the lightning of a storm squall out on the Lake but it moves away from us and there is little wind. High, very high in the sky we see a jet, still reflecting the sun's light, making a silver streak as it moves very fast to the north. When it is well past us the whole Lake explodes with a sonic boom that shatters the stillness of the night.

2300 The night is warm and there is a little wind coming off the land. At times we can smell the sand dunes and the trees, and feel the warm air coming out to sea. Course 020° .

2400 Course 0200 - 191.7 miles - Portage Lake light off starboard bow.

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At midnight we are making 4-5 knots in light air and our light air Genoa is really paying off.

From 0330 to 0400 the wind is doing tricks—it blows in on us from all directions, filling our sails and heeling us over one minute and the next, backwinding our sails or falling dead entirely.

O405 Course 025° - wind going around in circles. Making way on main and light air Genoa. 202 miles out of Chicago.

O415 The wind has come around and is off our port quarter. This is the wind we have been waiting for. We set our spinnaker and watch it fill and strain at the sheet and guy lines. Our log begins to click click as we move faster registering between 5 and 6 knots, and the bow once again is sending off a spray with a steady rhy thm as the boat pitches into forward motion.

O540 Point Betsie is on our beam. We are 212.8 miles out from Chicago and at last moving like a sailboat should. Fog has closed in along the shore and we can no longer see the sail boats that were in by the land during the night. The sky is clear to the west and the

fresh clean wind is abaft our beam. If this wind holds, this will be some day.

 $07\frac{1}{3}0$ Course 040° - 226.8 miles from start.

With the smell of freshly brewing coffee coming from below and Dam smiling out from behind his full beard over his bacon and eggs, we start our new day on the right note.

The wind is now astern and a following sea is beginning to build. Sleeping Bear point is just ahead with its giant open sand dunes reaching swiftly up to the sky. We will pass in close to shore at the Point and move up through the Manitou Passage. I have on two occasions stood on top of that beautiful sand dune and looked out over Lake Michigan. The view of the coast from out here is every bit as breathtaking.

By 0855 we have entered the Manitou Passage. The land falls away to the east and we set our course 040° for the shoal light off North Manitou Island. This shoal light is a manned crib that stands alone, roughly in the center of the passage, giving direction to the many ships that pass through these narrows. South Manitou Island is completely shrouded with fog as is the shore line of the mainland. The sky is clear above us and the wind has followed us around the corner and is still astern. The waves are building too, giving us extra driving force.

1015 Speed 8 - 10 m.p.h. We pass the North Manitou light and set course 035°. We are 244 miles out of Chicago and sailing could never be better. Our huge red and white spinnaker is straining hard on the sheets, the waves are building and following astern with greater force. We move best with heavy wind and we are now moving away from other boats that do better in light air.

1100 Course 040° - 249.3 miles - speed 8 - 10 m.p.h.

This is most exciting: we are surfing! The crew is on the after portion of the boat. The wind is pulling hard on spinnaker, main, and spinnaker staysail. The sea is building higher and breaking against the transom. Some of the smaller waves break and boil under the hull, while the larger ones will catch us in the stern and send us surfing for what seems like several city blocks. Our hull speed is 8½ m.p.h. and we are, at times, flying at over 12.

Gene has a straw hat that he bought down in the Caribbean several years ago. I have noticed that when sailing is at its best he has the tendancy to wear it. By noon the picture is complete: Gene has the tiller, wearing his hat, the entire crew on the back of the boat holding down the stern, the spinnaker pulling up the bow, the white capped waves driving hard against our transom, white and blue sky overhead with wind whistling through our sails, and the Ginik II is flying up the Lake in all her billowing glory, with excitement that would stir the heart of all lovers of sail.

The afternoon wind holds and by 1522 we have North Fox Island on our port beam, Little Traverse Bay on our starboard beam and Beaver Island 10 miles off our port bow, looking like a low dark line on the horizon. We have come 275.5 miles. Several boats that have followed the Wisconsin shore make an eastern course in this area and approach us from the west, cutting in below Beaver Island. More and more boats come into view as visability improves on the Lake. We now count 15 boats all on roughly the same course heading for Grays Reef.

Grays Reef passage is a one mile wide channel through the shallow shoal waters through which all the sail boats must pass.

1800 Course 045° - 294 miles from start - speed 8-9 m.p.h.

By now we are abeam of Ile aux Galets (Isle of Gales). This lonely Coast Guard station stands on a wind swept Island which is

very low in height. One lighthouse, one house, several small outbuildings and several trees is home for those who watch the light to warn shipping of the shallow water that would destroy any who would run up on the Island.

At 1900 we approach the shoal water at Grays Reef and the sea becomes very turbulant. The waves have been pushed along by a south wind without obstruction up until now, but here the water becomes very shallow and the pressure of this wave action sends white caps running in all directions. Our spinnaker is pulling hard to starboard now and these large waves are cresting under us. Gene fights the tiller to keep us from broaching.

The wind is becoming stronger now and our spinnaker is pulling us over. We spill as much wind as we can out of the main and the boom comes close to going into the water. We are layed way over now with water running around the winches as five of us bring in the spinnaker.

Suddenly the water turns bright green as we pass the lonely light crib that stands at the southern passage through Grays Reef. Our Genoa and mainsail move us at 8 and 9 m.p.h. down through this passage.

We pass the white shoal light house taking it to port at 2100. Daylight is passing and the sailing fleet is all in a line. We make the turn to course 090° and we can soon see the blinking lights of the Mackinac Bridge. The wind is fickle for a time as night settles over the Lake.

With darkness, we now have a strong wind from the south and begin running with the large Genoa and main sails. The pace picks up and we are soon driving 7 - 8 m.p.h.

2155 We are on course 090° when Vanguard E245 passes close astern, taking our wind. She has a spinnaker up and is being headed up by

using it. She moves past us and into the night.

2210 We change from Genoa to spinnaker for a time as the wind again moves behind us. This lasts but a short time when a heavy breeze developes off the shore to the southeast.

This is for us: strong wind and large Genoa, we beat to weather. One boat after another that has moved up on us now falls astern and we count two between us and the bridge: one we had not seen before and one that had luffed us earlier.

The Ginik is now driving hard. We run 8 - 9 m.p.h. and pass the first boat ahead of us. The lights of the Bridge glow brighter as we move in on the second boat, taking a black channel marker close to starboard.

Overhead the massive structure of the bridge overpowers the size of the Ginik II. The beauty of the lights stretching from shore to shore, the height of the two towers overhead effectively lighted, and the contrasting dark arching skeleton of the underside all combine to form one thrilling sight we will not soon forget.

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00 0 We pass under the Bridge two lengths ahead of the second boat and the crew cheers loudly as we do.

Six miles to go to the finish line. Ahead, the lights of Mackinac Island come into view. Large search lights play across the water lighting up an old abandoned light house that stands across the channel from the southern tip of Mackinac Island.

We change course, let out sail and drive hard to this finish line. The end of the race is every bit as exciting as the start. We light an official white torch to signal our approach and display our racing number so the racing committee ashore can identify us. We cross the line, the gun is fired, and our first big race is over

at 0055.

We have come 345.3 miles in a little over 83 hours. We are tired, excited, both happy and disappointed that the race is over. We start the engine, pull the sails and move into port. Here we find much of the fleet tied up and rafted out 4 and 5 deep to the available docks.

By 0130 we are tied to the coal dock on the Island and become aware of the festive mood that is rocking the Island. The music from the hotels and the combos on the docks and boats keep up their beat well into the wee hours of the morning.

Bay Bea, a 49 foot sloop out of Sturgeon Bay was declared the winner on corrected time. She was the second boat to arrive after the Norsaga crossed the line one hour and 15 minutes earlier. We finished 18th in our division of 24.

In the morning two of the crew catch the early boat to the mainland, having to return home for pressing business. The rest of us scrub down the boat and get everything shipshape for the return home.

The rest of the crew leave on the noon boat for St. Ignace, and Kathy Davidson and my wife Phyllis join Gene and me for the return home.

This is a whole new story that I shall save for another time. I would like only to mention that one port we stopped at was the bay on South Manitou Island. This Island at one time played an important role in the history of Lake shipping when steamers used wood to fire their boilers. It is also one of the few relatively untouched natural camping spots left along our shores. The natives speak with enthusiasm and loving affection of natural beauty that covers the Island and are quick to show you the huge virgin white

cedar and the second largest elm tree in the State of Michigan. For those of you who love plants, trees, clean water, high sand dunes, long low beaches and a lot of fresh air, a visit to this Island is a must. If you go, plan to stay for a few days and make arrangements to go back. I'm sure you will.

We arrive back at Holland late Saturday night, slip in through the dark channel, past the now deserted State Park and into the glassy quiet of Lake Macatawa. Off our starboard the golden flicker of the gas lights from Point West reflect across the water, and ahead is the quiet dimly lit waterfront where we will tie up and bring to a close one of the most memorable trips that we have ever taken.

As we drive home Gene says, "You know, Case, next year we should..."

