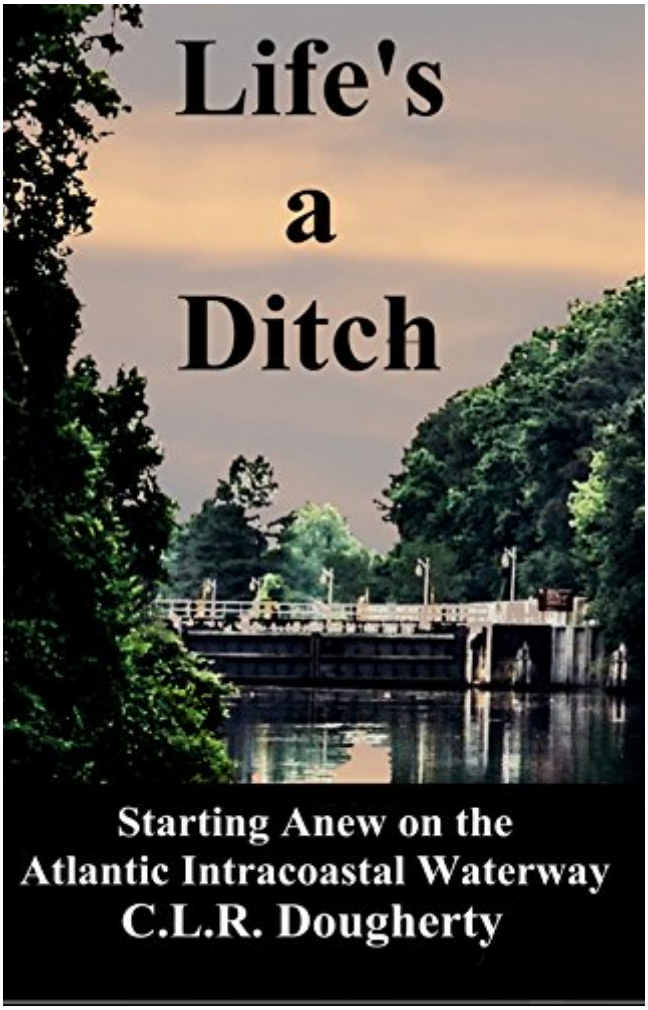
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Life's A Ditch: Starting Anew On The Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway



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Synopsis

When my wife and I decided to run away to sea, we thought we knew what we were doing. Our first few months on the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, or Ã¢â ¬Å“the Ditch,Ã¢â ¬Â• disabused us of that notion. Our seamanship was adequate, but our expectations weren't realistic. Life's a Ditch isn't so much about where we went and what we saw during our time in the Ditch, but about how we reacted to it and how our lives were changed by our experiences. Share the surprises we had and the choices that we made as we discovered what we got ourselves into when we abandoned our comfortable life ashore to become seagoing wanderers.

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Customer Reviews

I live very near the ICW (The Ditch) but have never had a boat to experience it. That is about to change. I am canvassing the market at this time. I think that I do not have the skills to tackle the Waterway at this time as I'll be a singlehanded. No one in my family is particularly interested in the water or boating.Living In Jacksonville, FL, as I do, I think I'll be able to gain the requisite skills on the beautiful St. Johns River which is no trickling stream.I really enjoyed "my trip" with the Dougherties. They seem to have transferred an attitude to me that most anything is possible if one is prepared. Their story is different and inspiring because they were so wise in preparing for their

new lifestyle before they commence it and due to planning, there were no horrifying stories of 'Perfect' storms, perils at sea, and that sort of drama.The neatest thing I can think of is encountering them when and if I start my own adventure. They have convinced me that I can do it if I prepare myself properly and prepare my vessel properly. This book is more expensive than it initially seemed that it would be because it has caused me to invest in a shell of books on sailing, seamanship, coastal navigation and piloting, and even celestial navigation. Can I assimilate all that stuff? I've no idea, but I'm having a wonderful time with it so far. You never know until you try. It may be the Walter Mitty in me, but that's OK too. Sometimes the most pleasure is in the anticipation!

This is a non fiction account of Charles and Leslie Dougherty's voyage down the Intercostal Waterway as they first began their new life of living totally aboard their sailboat. In the years to come, they would become veteran sailors, well versed in the Caribbean, but all journeys start with a beginning, and this is the story of those first steps.It is informative, humorous, touching, exciting,and a real pleasurable read. I would say that it should, along with the companion book, "Dunga de Island" be REQUIRED reading to anyone who harbors the dream of living aboard a boat and cruising the islands as a life style choice. It is not all fun! It is, at times, downright dangerous! It is always WORK!But what impressed me most about this is the insight I achieved into the personalities and character of the two people involved. Having "known" them for years through his novels, and online communications, I have a deeper respect for both Charles and especially his wife Leslie. She is a unique and awesome woman. Mr. Dougherty is most fortunate to have her, and her shared commitment to that lifestyle. I know my wife wouldn't last one day. They are most suited for each other, and together, they have lived the life of which he writes.I whole heartedly recommend this book.

Bud and Leslie are living the life to which my husband and I aspire. Last year, after attending the annual Maine Boatbuilder's Show, Hugh came home and asked, "What do you think about selling everything and living aboard a boat?" I think I surprised the heck out of him by saying, "Yep. I could do that!" We have since bought a 1932 wooden Bridge Deck Cruiser that was originally designed and used for passages between Washington State and the salmon fishing grounds of Alaska. More recent owners have used her for cruising and have lived aboard for several years. We transported her cross-country, and cruised all over Casco Bay every spare chance we could, well into October. A few overnights convinced us that we wanted to pursue this further. Katie Mack is currently on the hard going through a major rebuild, especially of whatever is below the waterline. We have been

reading as many books about the cruising life, and both Life's a Ditch and Dungda de Islan' are the best we've read so far -- mostly because their attitude is closest to what we are searching for. Looking forward to their next adventures, and hope someday to meet them dungda de island.

The sailing adventure begins with Charles and Leslie Dougherty in this delightful prequel to Dungda de Islan', and I recommend both books to anyone interested in travel. Reading this book, I was struck by the similarity in lifestyles that we shared. My husband and I retired early and spent over five years traveling the country in our RV. The types of friends we met and our day-to-day discoveries were very similar. Although our rig traveled across blacktop highways while theirs sailed the Inland Waterway, the fantastic scenery our country offers is paradise to the full-time vagabond.Of course life's mundane chores distract from the perfect dream, but grocery shopping, laundry, and repairs can become dramatic quests to the traveler. When the explorer strikes out on the road (or the Ditch) a pang of fear invades even the most courageous heart. Can we survive without the comforts of home? The true adventurer learns to face problems head on and solve them without sniveling. Snug harbors can be found just around the bend, offering new friendships and discoveries. When the world clamors, a quiet retreat beckons the weary sailor where the nearest neighbor hides behind a wall of lush forest and solitude reigns.We learned that a "life on the road" was not meant for everyone, but those stalwart souls who find freedom in the vagabond lifestyle will seldom give it up for civilization and security. Charles and Leslie began their adventure on the Ditch. Their timid steps into the unknown became confident strides as they learned they could handle anything and set their sights on new ports of call for their future. I enjoyed traveling with them and recommend this book to anyone who wonders what a nomadic life looks like in modern times. This book is the beginning of their journey, and I'm sure you'll want to continue the adventure in the next one.

Everything my wife and I wanted to know about cruising America's eastern ship channel (the ditch). The author's personal perspective of their trip from the Northeast to the Bahamas. Great descriptions of the scenery, towns, and local flavor encountered on the journey(s). A fun and knowledgeable book.

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