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A Baltimore County Police Department  
Boating Safety Day Event - page 26

*photo by David Sites*

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# UPPER BAY Boating

May 2018

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photo by Bruce Barr

## Upper Bay Boating

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Safety on the water has always been the first thing boater should be thinking about, but sometimes it takes a back burner to the lore of the sea. We recently lost a kayaker whom went out in gale force winds, and without a life vest. It's one thing to get in trouble out on the bay after spending hours soaking up the sun, then running into a severe thunder storm later in the day. Happens to all of us eventually, but if you are prepared, you live through it.



In this edition of Upper Bay Boating, we have a special section letting you know what to expect on June 2cd at the Marvin Haw Safety Day. We also have some columns on boat safety in the issue. When we came out four years ago, one of our goals was to promote safe boat operation, and we have accomplished that. I even had a reader tell me I spend too much time preaching safety, and not enough on just plain fun out on the water. I kind of think they go hand in hand. If you screw up on land, chances are you will live to tell about it, but it's another story out on the bay.

Boating Safety Classes are available by many organizations, the Coast Guard Auxiliary offers Safety Checks, and most experienced boaters are willing to help others make sure you are doing everything right. So you should have no excuse to do it right. We offer class listings for free to anyone that provides them, so check out them out and sign up today. So enough preaching about safety; go ahead and get your boat ready, and have a safe and happy time out on the Upper Bay.



**“The sea is the same as it has been since before men ever went on it in boats.”**

**- Ernest Hemingway**

Just a reminder, we welcome your photos and stories of you good time out on the water, we can't do this without you so please send them in to: [dave@upperbayboating.com](mailto:dave@upperbayboating.com). Also please remember I couldn't print this magazine without the support of the loyal advertisers. SO- if you need anything for the boat, looking for a new place to keep the boat, or perhaps looking for a new boat, please check out the ads in this magazine, contact a few advertisers, and tell them you saw it in Upper Bay Boating.

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# Protest Bad Boating Behavior

By *Wendy Gilbert*- Features Editor

## Protect your right to boating safely

Now that the 2018 boating season is finally upon us, I am overjoyed to see more boat traffic on the upper Chesapeake Bay.

Those hardy souls in their little green bass boats have been joined by their more colorful and boisterous cousins. Perhaps a bit behind schedule, but despite Old Man Winter's persistence, nothing can trump May.

Perhaps because of my boosted mood, I am going to avoid all the classic column subjects for this time of year. You know what they are. My cronies and I ramble on and on about what a long and difficult winter we had, we write line and lines about how eager we are to get out on the water, and don't forget the prolific paragraphs urging everyone to have a fun and safe season.

Writers will wax on about burning their socks, cleaning their gear and tap out endless how to articles instructing boaters on spring commissioning.

I have written all of those several times and if I do say so myself, I've done a good job. I agree that this winter was long and windy, I am excited for my first outing and Lord, I really do want everyone to have fun and be safe.

Really safe.

As in staying alive.

Maryland has a terrible history of boating deaths. Dozens die here every single year. Season after season, boaters are killed and injured by incredibly preventable causes.

Haven't we had enough?

Why don't we stage our own protests and march on down to the boat ramps and urge our fellow boaters to:

Stop speeding.

Stop drinking like idiots.

Pay attention to the weather conditions and alerts.

I don't know about you, but I've been watching the news this winter and I am emboldened by students who want to curb gun violence and teachers who demand better conditions.

Drunk boaters behind the wheel of a speeding boat in rough chop could be considered just as dangerous to the rest of us as any criminal madly firing an automatic weapon.

At the risk of "preaching to the choir" I urge all of you to stop being so darned polite and stop minding your own business.

If you see someone acting the fool this season, say something. Do something.

Make the call. Report dangerous boating practices.

We'll all be better for it and perhaps a few of us will be here for next season thanks to you.

*Wendy Gilbert*



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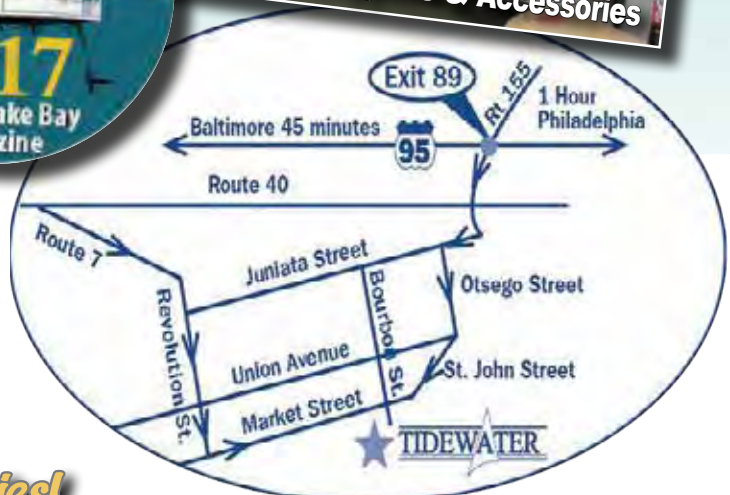
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# Take Your Safe Boating Class Now

By Wendy Gilbert – Features Editor

When I took my USCG safe boating course at the local community college many years ago, I learned a lot more than I expected. Not that I thought I knew it all, but I did have a habit of letting the captain sweat the small (and the big stuff). On the first day of class, I realized that I had been a pretty terrible first mate. One the second day of class, I realized that I had been a pretty terrible passenger as well.

By the time I attended all the classes and turned my sleek booklet into a dog-eared mess, it was time for the final.

We all sat quietly at our desks, number 2 pencils freshly sharpened in hand and waited for the signal to begin. As is my nature, I sought my safe place in the middle. When about half the class had turned in their test papers, I hastily finished mine and handed it in.

The instructor quickly graded it and discovered 3 errors. I was a bit chagrined, as I could see on his ledger that most everyone else had a perfect score. As he handed it back to me, he frowned and said, "I know who your boss is."

If only there had been online safe boating classes back then! If only I hadn't been so hasty. Boating is no place for "if onlies".

I did score high enough to easily achieve the 80 percent required and I still have my little Maryland Safe Boating card to prove it. Not that the current boss needs to know...

Here's how to get your own Maryland Safe Boating Certificate:

## I. Classroom

The Maryland Basic Boating Course is taught by trained instructors and must be a minimum of 8 hours in length. Instructors may use visual aids, movies, projected images, and other methods to provide information to class members. All students are encouraged to ask question as the class moves along. Students must attend all classroom sessions and achieve a score of 80% on the final exam to pass. Some agencies require that youngsters under a certain age attend with a participating adult. Most of the classroom classes will require registration. Please call the numbers listed with the courses for the specific information.

## II. On-Line

Maryland Basic Boating Online Course.

The Maryland Basic Boating Course is available on-line. However, there is no opportunity to ask questions since there is no instructor. Study at home, on your own schedule, and at your own pace. When you pass the on-line exam from one of the providers listed below, you will be instructed as to how you will receive your valid boating safety certificate. Please



photo by Patty Haw

make sure that the initials N.A.S.B.L.A. are printed on your final certificate. The State will be able to verify that you completed a valid boating safety course. However, replacement certificates can only be issued by the provider of the course.

## Three online course options:

- [www.boat-ed.com/maryland](http://www.boat-ed.com/maryland) - by Boat Ed 1-800-830-2268
- [www.boaterexam.com/usa/maryland](http://www.boaterexam.com/usa/maryland) - by Boater Exam 1-866-764-2628
- [www.boatus.org/maryland/](http://www.boatus.org/maryland/) - By Boat US Foundation 1-800-245-2628

## III. Maryland Boating Equivalency Exam

The Safety Education Section suggests that boaters attend a Maryland Basic Boating Class (remember, the law specifies that anyone born on or after July 1, 1972, must have a Certificate of Boating Safety Education to operate a mechanically propelled vessel on Maryland waters). However, due to certain circumstances, some people are unable to attend all sessions of the eight-hour course. To facilitate the availability of the course, the Maryland Natural Resources Police Safety Education Section has created the Maryland Basic Boating Equivalency Examination. Boaters who are unable to attend the class, and need a Certificate of Boating Safety Education, may obtain a copy of the Boat Maryland textbook, the textbook used in all boating safety classes, at one of the locations listed below. After studying the material contained in the textbook, contact one of the test sites marked with an asterisk, to schedule a date and time to take the exam. The exam consists of 65 multiple-choice questions designed to measure comprehension regarding information contained in the textbook. A score of 80 percent is required to pass the examination. Failure to pass the examination after two attempts will require a student to attend a classroom course in order obtain the Certificate of Boating Safety Education.



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# New Fishing Organization Springs Into 2018

by Tim Campbell

The tournament scene is changing in 2018 with the introduction of Captain Joe Thorpe's new fishing organization, the Chesapeake Bay Sportfishing Association. Joe was inspired to start CBSFA not only as a new tournament series, but also as another way to get Maryland anglers united in fishing. Joe grew up in Baltimore County on Back River and is an avid fisherman, former commercial crabber and an active member of numerous local fishing clubs. Joe is an IT Specialist by trade with a Bachelor of Science degree from Notre Dame in Radiological Sciences. Not only is he educated, Joe is a very nice guy too. He already has approval dates for his new tournament series and promises to conduct the fishing contests in an honest and professional manner. In fact, Joe will post the tournament entries online so everyone can see the number of boats and who is registered for the contests. Also, the payouts will be posted online because Joe understands that transparency in tournaments is needed now more than ever.

Three tournaments are scheduled for 2018, one in the spring, one summer and one fall tournament. Saturday, May 5th and Sunday, May 6th starts the new Chesapeake Bay Spring Sportfishing Tournament. It is for amateurs only. Then Joe has August 25th (Rain date August 26th) as the CBSFA Summer Rockfish Tournament and November 10th and 11th (Rain date Nov 24th, 25th) for the CBSFA Fall Rockfish Tournament. The tournaments are a means to raise funds to support the organization, but they are also a way to have some fun competition. The tournaments will include Catch and Release categories as well as Catch and Consume.



*Captain Joe Thorpe with a 47 inch striped bass.*

Joe also wants to have a tournament focused on children and families since the future of fishing is in the hands of the next generation. But the main idea according to Joe is to have another voice in Annapolis to advocate for our fishing rights. Like many Marylanders, Joe loves the bay and wants to see the water quality and good fishing opportunities continue to improve. He would be thrilled to see like-minded folks band together to restore and improve our waterways by partnering with the Back River Restoration Committee and the Coastal Conservation Association of Maryland.

Joe has an evolving business plan and is open to ideas. He is volunteering his time to get this new venture off the ground. The plan is to take any profits made during the first year and apply those funds toward advertising and hiring an administrative assistant. Joe intends to transition CBSFA into a non-profit organization. Joe sees CBSFA growing into a successful and enjoyable tournament series which demonstrates honesty and integrity. He and his wife are committed to building this

new organization and have put start-up money on the line. The couple looks forward to fine-tuning the organization and getting through the first year of running tournaments so people can see they are in this for the long haul. Joe's goal is to make the Chesapeake Bay Sportfishing Association a proud and vital organization.

Joe is looking to assemble a Board of Directors so if you're interested, or if you have any questions at all, please contact him at [JTHORPE@CBSFA.CLUB](mailto:JTHORPE@CBSFA.CLUB) or 410-868-5488. See the new website [www.cbsfa.club](http://www.cbsfa.club)

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# Forgotten Striper Season

By Tim Sherman

Striped bass enthusiasts take many different approaches and covet different techniques and times of year to fish. Already we've had the opportunities in the catch and release season on the Susquehanna Flats and during the trophy season in the main stem of the bay. Still there is one early season that is forgotten about for all but those loyal to it.

In mid-May the Susquehanna River and Flats open to a mini-season of sorts. From May 16 to May 31 anglers fishing there are allowed to keep one striper in the 20-inch to 26-inch range. One fisherman who has not forgotten the short season is retired bass and light tackle guide Jerry Sersen. He says it's a great time to kickstart the year's light tackle adventures.

Some anglers may feel that it is not worth their while to go fishing when they are allowed to keep only one fish. And sometimes they have trouble catching stripers in the legal-size range. Jerry says that this isn't a bad problem to have. The stripers that have to be released are typically over 26 inches. So, yes, a day on the water catching and releasing quality stripers to keep one that fills the slot is well worth it.

Jerry works the lower end of the flats where he has a milk run of sorts. He says the key is to move along until you find the fish. When you do find them, the school will keep you busy. All of his spots have some sort of structural change, mainly ditches that are close to a shallow flat. He is a firm believer that tide and current determine whether fish will be shallow or deep, keeping in mind that shallow means 3 feet and deep means 5 to 8 feet. Higher tides allow stripers to roam flats and corral baitfish. Lower tides force them into the adjacent deeper water where they wait for the baitfish to wash by.

Sersen has several places on both the north and south end of the flats where he targets mid-May rockfish. His first destination is the area known as the shad ditches. It's a well-known spot along the old Fishing Battery. From there he will run a bit farther south to check shoreline points with deep water troughs. Some of these troughs are a slightly deeper than the shad ditches, yet stripers will congregate in them.

On the Cecil County side of the flats, Jerry will work the north channel from Carpenter Point to all the way to Perryville. He has spots marked with his onboard electronics, but says the Flats can change from year to year. If he catches rockfish in an area that he hasn't marked on his GPS, you can bet he'll make a new waypoint.



Jerry and Kurt

Jerry says you don't need to load the boat down with a ton of lures. He relies on a small assortment to bring stripers to the boat. He likes to start out with a 5-inch jerkbait. The erratic action of the hardbody bait will test the aggressiveness of stripers in the area. Next, he'll cast a Zman StreakZ soft jerkbait impaled on a 3/8-ounce jig head. He feels that even though he is only fishing to depths of 8 feet, this weight allows him to maintain contact with the bottom as he works the soft bait swiftly. For a little added action, Jerry may use Zman's Diesel Minnow paddle tail on the same size jig head.

Sersen will have another rod on standby. It's the one reserved for when stripers are chasing bait on the surface. When the frenzy erupts, Jerry casts a Smack It Jr. popping plug to the melee. The topwater action is another draw to the forgotten season.

Knowing where to fish and what to use is only parts of the equation. Jerry stresses that a stealth approach is a must. Shallow water stripers are easily spooked. He suggests shutting down your motor well away from your spot. Use your trolling motor as little as possible. In fact, drifting with the wind or current is a better ploy. Jerry says that we are all guilty from time to time of using the "bent rod" pattern. If you plan to join in on someone else's spot, be courteous and use these same stealthy tactics. Otherwise, you've ruined the spot for all who are there catching.

Indeed, there are light tackle opportunities to be had for stripers before the main season starts on June 1. If you take the opportunity to fish the Flats during this abbreviated May season, it will be forgotten no longer.

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**Boating and Recreational Classes at (CCBC)** The Community College of Baltimore County Md. Boating courses at our Essex campus held on **2 Wednesday evenings**, & Boating courses at our Hunt Valley campus held on **2 Thurs evenings**, For schedule call 443-840-1237 or email boating at ccbcmd.edu

**Bowleys Quarters VFC Safe Boaters Courses** 900 Bowleys Quarters Rd. Middle river, Md. 21220 Cost is \$35.00 Call 410-800-8420 to register **May 8 & 10; 26 & 27**

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**US Coast Guard Auxiliary Safe Boating Course** **May 5&6** at the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum 443-504-3880

**Rock Hall Marine Restoration & Heritage Center Open House** **May 5** 11-4 at the Clam House at 21083 Chesapeake Ave. in Rock Hall Md. 410-639-9106

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**The Great Oak Landing Yacht Club Boating Flea Market** **May 20** at 9 am. Contact Roy Bant at [rbant@Comcast.net](mailto:rbant@Comcast.net) or 215-740-5066.

**Nautical Flea Market** **May 26** 8-4 - at Rock Hall Yacht Club 22759 McKinleyville Rd 410-639-2182

**Gerd Rube Tailgate Party** **June 1** at Joppatowne Marina 510 Riviera Dr. Joppa, Maryland, 21085 (443) 981-2469

**SGT. Marvin T Haw IV Boating Safety Day** **June 2** from 11-4 Wilson Pt. Park 950 Beech Dr, Middle River, Maryland 21220 See special section in our this issue

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# VSCs (Vessel Safety Checks)

By Captain Mark Galasso  
Tuna the Tide Charter Service  
Grasonville, Maryland

Part of every boater's spring commissioning should be a vessel safety check. In my case I usually get the local Sail and Power Squadron or the Coast Guard Auxiliary to perform the check. It doesn't cost anything and it's always nice to have another set of trained eyes looking over my vessels prior to the spring boating season. Since they have no

enforcement powers it boils down to great people volunteering their time to help boaters be safe. Take advantage of them.

I always save my prior safety checks so before I call to have the check done I go through my last two inspections to see what might be a potential hang up. So here is what I usually run into.

Know where your paperwork is. It should all be in one place with easy access. Registration, licenses past inspections and documentation papers if your vessel is documented. You should also have a written plan of action for emergencies. I keep one laminated in plain view of my crew and passengers.

Dewatering devices are another potential hang up. All vessels are required to have a way of removing water from the boat. In some cases, it may just be a bucket. If your vessel has bilge pumps make sure they operate correctly. Most bilge pumps are on float switches directly wired to the batteries. The floats can stick over the winter due to freezing bilge water and burn out the pumps.

Lighting is something else that can go bad over the winter. Bulb contacts can corrode or wiring may give up the ghost. All vessels that are required to have Navigation and Anchor lights must have them in good working order. If you have a small vessel that has a portable set of Navigation lights change the batteries.

Life Jackets need to be checked. They must be in good working order with usable straps, not frayed or missing straps. Remember vests and other floatation devices are acceptable but must be worn at all times when boating. Boats

are also required to have a throw able floatation device. But it must be accompanied by a way to attach it to the vessel. I keep a coil of line with a large closable hook close to my throw ring.



Fire extinguishers must have the gauge in the green. They all have a round gauge that displays whether they are good. Needle in red get rid of it and replace it. Boats are also required to have signaling devices. Both visual and sound. Visual devices like flares have an expiration date on them. They must be current. I save my old flares but have a kit with all my current

visual signals handy. I don't have to sift through bags of old flares to find the most recent ones. For sound signals I keep whistles, small hand horns and my main horn close at hand. My 20-year-old main horn is starting to sound like a dying Bullfrog so I have backups handy just in case.

If your vessel has inboard gas engines you MUST have a blower that works to clear gas fumes out of the bilge. This might be one of the most important safety features on this type of vessel. Check the connections and wiring. Most fires and explosions on gas boats are caused by faulty wiring in the bilge.

If your vessel passes the safety check you receive a decal. Display it prominently on your boat. It may keep you from getting inspected by the Coast Guard or the Department of Natural Resources. And though that sounds a little self-serving it is really a good thing for boating in general. The Coast Guard and DNR have plenty of other vessels to inspect as well as other duties. By not having to spend time on board your vessel they might be able to help another operator assure their vessel is prepared for any emergency. Believe me there are plenty of people that put the boat in the water and never give it a second thought. Unfortunately, they usually don't realize there is a problem until it REALLY is a problem.

Have a great 2018 boating season. Let's all get off on the right foot.

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# Top 10 Fuel Saving Tips

By Doug Dawson



Fuel costs are directly related to how much your boat is used and how fast you drive it—the same as any vehicle. But, now that fuel prices are skyrocketing, it has a direct impact on our boating pleasure.

Brenda and I have come up with 10 ways to save money on fuel this boating season, so that you can maximize your boating pleasure while minimizing your fuel costs. It is amazing what you can come up with when you set your mind to it.

**1. Put your boat on a diet!** Shed those extra pounds from the bilge and lockers. Empty out all those extra items that you really don't need aboard; for example, extra oil, extra spare parts, tools, ropes, canned goods, cruise books—keep just the essentials. Look at each locker, cupboard, drawer, box and storage space. What don't you need and what do you really need aboard? Take it home or put it in your dock box. You can always take them on long trips that you really need them for. Not dragging around all this extra weight will save you fuel dollars. Run on the bottom half of the fuel tanks, rather than burning extra fuel to haul around full tanks. You will have to visit the fuel dock more often, but it will save you money. Water weighs over 8 pounds per gallon, so don't drag around the weight of an extra body on board in your water tanks, if you don't have to. Empty your holding tank often to reduce the weight carried aboard.

**2. Tips When Fueling** – Fuel storage tanks are underground and the colder the ground, the more dense the fuel, so fill up early in the day when the ground is still cold. When the fuel warms up, it expands and, as a result, a gallon isn't really a gallon. Pump on low mode to reduce the vapors while pumping. Gas tanks on cars are not vented (closed unit) so do not experience any measure of evaporation of gas. Boats, on the other hand, because they are vented, do have some measure of evaporation of gas.

**3. Tune up the Motor(s)** Like vehicles, boat engines that are well tuned and regularly serviced, are more fuel efficient than those that aren't, so be sure to tune up your motor(s) and service them regularly including oil and filter changes once a season. Reduced friction saves fuel. It will also help the environment.

**4. Prop Right.** Make sure you are propped correctly and that the prop(s) has no dings or gouges. Use a computer prop sizing service to ensure that you have the right diameter, pitch, blade area, and prop configuration. You could save up to 1 gallon in every 10 gallons of fuel.

**5. Reduce Speed** or at least drive at a speed of less than 1800 rpm. For the typical boater who is using the boat for short weekend cruises from the marina to nearby pre-selected destinations, this is the best way to save money on fuel so that the hull is displacing, rather than pushing it up on to plane. If it is a relatively short jaunt of a few miles, and it takes twice or three times as long, so what. Enjoy the view and save.

Decreasing speed in a displacement hull by only 10% could save you 20% in fuel costs. Cutting speed by 1 or 2 knots can cut consumption 30 to 50%.

A planing hull on plane, has the greatest fuel economy at the point where it first comes onto plane and skims the surface of the water.

Limiting the amount of time a planing boat displaces water before coming onto plane will also use less fuel. But, you need to bring the

boat up onto plane at a quick steady pace instead of hammering the throttle(s) or taking forever to get there. The most efficient speed varies from boat to boat.

**6. Keep your boat bottom scrubbed and clean,** so that you are not dragging a carpet of marine growth that zaps power and wastes fuel. Keep the bottom clean and free of weeds and barnacles. To feel how much drag there is, the next time you are at the beach, pull a beach towel through the water. If your boat is trailerable, scrub the bottom regularly. On a larger boat, scrub it next time you go to the beach, with a long handled scrub brush.

**7. Paint Your Bottom.** If you are boating in water that encourages the fast growth of algae on your bottom, it would be worth your while to paint the bottom with antifouling. It is important to use the right paint to reduce the friction most.

**8. Diesel Power.** If your boat has diesel power, you paid more in the beginning but you will be saving on the on-going fuel costs over the same gasoline powered vessel. Diesel engines cost less to run than gas and they are most efficient when run at 80% of maximum speed.

**9. Switch to closer destinations.** If your activities include many long distance trips, you should consider choosing closer destinations, or run at a lower rpm to get there. Slower and closer will save fuel dollars.

**10. Trim Your Boat.** Using trim tabs and power trim wisely prevents plowing and reduces drag allowing you to run on plane at a lower rpm. This will help your boat move through the water more efficiently, run quieter and save fuel as well.

Several years ago, Brenda and I decided to enjoy our boat after work. At 5:00, we left the office with a picnic basket, drove 5 minutes to the boat, idled upwind out into the bay a few minutes then turned off the motors. As we drifted back to the harbor over the next two hours, the silence, cool breeze, barbecued steaks, sunset—everything was fantastic. Now we do this regularly and take friends with us. It's a great way to enjoy the water, socialize with friends and save on fuel.

Brenda and I are cost conscious, but don't let the fluctuating price of fuel put a damper on our boating. We really look forward to and concentrate on the positive, enjoying our drifting, dining and watching sunsets for example.

Everything is relative. For every \$100 spent last year, you'll be able to save a percentage of it with some fuel-saving practices.

Remember that fuel is only a fraction of your boating investment. Save where you can and re-apply those savings to enjoying your boat more.

Don't let the price of fuel get in the way of your boating enjoyment.

Doug Dawson is a 5th Generation marine professional. See [BoatingWithDawsons.com](http://BoatingWithDawsons.com) Boating Books and Docking Lessons and for more boating tips



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# Boat Loads of Fun!

By Montana Grant

**B**oating is a wonderful activity. Humans are basically “bags of water”. When we are in or around water, our mood, temperament, and spirit go with the flow. The sounds, smells, and feel of water enhances our lives as we wet our whistles and feel the power.

Whether you boat in a canoe or a yacht, the feelings are the same. The real sin about boating is when you acquire a boat and never use it. We all have seen hundreds of boats sitting in driveways, lawns, boat slips, and boatyards. What a waste!

It is true that boats, RV's, and our power toys require maintenance and work. The trick is to find a way to make the chores purposeful. When you invest effort into your craft and it pays off with joy, pleasure, pride, and happiness, then the work is a small price to pay.

## Use it or lose it

Boats are meant to be used. You may need to make an extra effort to launch, but once afloat, it is always worth it. Consider the ways that you enjoy using your boat and find friends that you wish to share your leisure time with. If you can't make time to use your water crafts, send them down the river for someone else to enjoy.

## Go Fishing

This is my primary use of a boat. Whether a canoe, drift boat, or power skiff, fishing is just great fun. Explore the waters and species that inhabit your waters. Now, do your homework to discover the where, when, how, and skills that you need to catch some fish. This may mean additional electronics, baits, gear, or strategies that you need to learn. Once the fish start to come over the rail, it will be worth it. I have never met anyone that does not enjoy catching fish.

## Relax and Chill

After working so hard to buy your boat, we all want to reap the benefits. Once the boat is afloat, the stress drips away with every paddle or oar stroke. When the motor is powered up, your stress is powered down. This is when the effort becomes worthwhile. There is something magical when you are in control of your craft and feel the wind and spray. AAHHH!!!

## Jump in and Take a Dip

Swimming is so much fun. When our bodies of water float in water, there is a balance that keeps our attitudes and lives afloat. Everyone needs to know how to swim. Water safety is so important. Start by teaching others how to swim, tube, drift, or wear a live vest. Once they become comfortable, get out the kneeboards, wakeboards, and skis. Drag them safely around and watch the smiles grow. Discover your favorite cove or riverbank to visit.

## History cruises are educational and fun

Maybe pick a theme such as the war of 1812. Visit Tangier Island, where the main British base was located. Then travel up the Potomac toward Washington DC. Now follow the British



ships routes as they Burned Havre De Grace and other bayside towns. Finally, visit Fort McHenry where the war ended. There is much to see and learn about our American and nautical history.

## Follow the bite

Pick a species of fish like stripers or shad or crabs and migrate with the critters. Fish and explore the Science of their amazing paths. Stop at local harbors to discover new foods and friends. Who really makes the best Stuffed Rockfish or Crab cakes? You be the judge and bite into your favorite foods and compare the best.

Use your boat to help keep your life afloat. The joy we get from celebrating our wonderful waters is certainly worth the time and effort.

## Anchors away!



## Montana Grant

As a retired Educator, Consultant, Naturalist, Guide, and Freelance Writer, Montana Grant spends much of his life sharing secrets, tips, and stories about the great outdoors. His roots are from Western Maryland's Appalachian Mountains but reach to Montana's Great Rockies. Montana Grant is an award-winning educator in public schools and universities. As an outdoor writer, Scoutmaster, hunting and fishing guide, or just a friend that shares his love of the outdoors, Montana Grant is dedicated to teaching others how to appreciate, respect, and enjoy nature. His blog can be followed at [www.montanagrantsfishing.com](http://www.montanagrantsfishing.com).

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## Save Yourself Some Grief and Plan for the Season by James Bedell

In the last issue, I wrote about spring projects and how to finish them with great efficiency. And yet, I still haven't started any of my own. I'm sure most of you are wondering when the season will come. It's nearly here, and I for one am not waiting any longer. As I write this my boat sits uncovered, ready for the warm and sunny days ahead. While I am not looking forward to the varnish work that must be redone after collecting moisture this winter, or re-galvanizing my now rusty anchor; I am looking forward to the beach. Between now and then, the spring list will be completed and the temperatures will rise, but somehow I just know that come launch day something will go wrong. Will I forget the plug? Will I have enough lines? Will the 1998 Johnson sputter back to life again this spring? Who knows? There is no way to know what misfortune will hit come the first launch of the spring. And no matter how much you plan ahead, you'll probably overlook something. Be sure to plan ahead to handle it with a bit more grace than last year. That's my goal- not to somehow see the unforeseen, but to take the unforeseen in stride and not let it ruin my frostbite cruise. Every one of us knows that a captain can get a bit...touchy when things go wrong. Especially when they start to go wrong right away. Let's all resolve to let cooler heads prevail and handle the circumstances calmly and coolly. Let's be the calm, collected captains that make others look on with admiration; instead of the captains that bark orders at their families and go red in the face because things aren't going according to plan. I've done my fair share of barking orders when the engine won't start, the anchor won't come up, or the line is just a hair too short. Little by little I get better at handling these crises through careful preparation, both mentally and physically. I now religiously check shackles for tightness, carburetors for debris, lines for wear, and props for damage. If it has stranded me before, now I know to check. If it happens again, then I only have myself to blame.

Complacency is often what gets us into the worst conundrums, whether it is running aground early in the season because sandbars have shifted, or losing your boat because your anchor is just a bit too small (if you are a reader of previous issues, you'll know this one has happened to me!). The point is never to trust that the facts from last year hold true this year. It is a new season, and for a boat and its gear, it's a whole new life. Make this year's preseason check the most thorough one yet. Don't let something you could notice now ruin a day of boating later. I have a small, simple boat which makes

it easy to check all of my systems quickly and easily. Because of this, I notice any maintenance issues early and can deal with them before they cause a serious problem. If you take just ten minutes each weekend to survey your systems you just may be able to prevent your next ruined day.

Of course, even with planning and proper maintenance checks, something is bound to happen. That's where the mental preparation comes in. Don't panic, just stay calm and look for the best possible solution. I once ran out of gas in my parents' bow rider while taking my cousin and uncle out for a joy ride. As the engine died and we began drifting I started to panic. It was just getting to be dusk and I had no idea how to get us home. It was then that it hit me; I really had no reason to be panicking. We were anchored outside of the channel with working lights, and my parents knew when to expect us back so I didn't need to panic. After unsuccessful attempt to hail my parents, I began hailing for any boats in the area. For a while there was no one around and I knew I had to keep my young cousin from panicking so I gave the VHF a rest and I just sat back and enjoyed the sunset at anchor. I could have called the coast guard or a tow, but at this point we were in no real danger. It took a while for me to see that, but once I did it was easy to think about the problem and try to find a solution. I hailed on the VHF every few minutes and each time I saw another boat. Eventually, I reached a passing boat and got some assistance. It wasn't long before they hooked a line to us and started to tow us in. The only problem was that it was a catamaran of about 25' with a 5hp motor chugging along at full bore. We barely made headway into the tide. It was agonizingly slow and quite embarrassing, but in the end we got home and everyone was safe.

The point is this; we all have a day gone wrong on the water every now and again. If you have your basic safety gear, a plan for emergencies, and a cool demeanor, nothing can ruin a day out on the bay. If you're safe and afloat, don't let the other little disasters get you down. Everyone will follow the mood of the captain in the event of a problem. Be cautious, be patient, and be respectful. Everyone wants to have a good time on the water, something they can remember for years to come. If you can stay calm and collected even a terrible outing can become a good story. So be the captain that solves the problem, the captain that keeps guests coming back season after season.

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<b>May 20th</b> Coast Guard Safety Check	<b>August 25th</b> Clash of the Titans Car Show and Poker Runs of America Lunch Stop
<b>June 1st</b> Gerd Rube Straight Out of Key West Tailgate Party	<b>September 21st</b> Gerd Rube- Straight out of Key West
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*Baltimore Inner Harbor- by Thomas Scilopoti*





# 3rd Annual Sgt. Marvin T. Haw IV Boating Safety Day

Please join the Baltimore County Police Marine Unit along with the Essex Precinct, Natural Resources Police, the United States Coast Guard, and many other Agencies for our 3rd Annual Boating Safety Day!

Come witness and participate in water safety demonstrations. Enjoy fun in the sun, prizes, food from various local vendors and meet with local marine businesses. Learn and pass on the importance of Boater Safety!



## “Sober Boater, Safe Boater”

Saturday, June 2, 2018

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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3rd Annual  
**Sgt. Marvin T. Haw IV**  
**Boating Safety Day**

**A Baltimore County  
Police Department  
Boating Safety Day  
Event**

**Celebrate Boating  
Safety**

There are several things certain in life. One is that you cannot walk away from a boating accident. The more we as boaters, are aware of potential hazards; the better prepared we will be if one should arise. On June 2 the Baltimore County Police Marine Unit will host the Third Annual Sargent Marvin T. Haw Boating Safety Day at Wilson Point Park in Middle River. The event runs from 11:00am to 4:00pm and will highlight safe boating operation.

Sargent Marvin Haw was Commander of the Baltimore County Police Marine Unit. He served 28 years in the BCPD. Sargent Haw was a Coast Guard licensed 100 Ton Master Captain, and an avid recreational boater. He died in January 2016.

Sargent Bob Boudier of the marine unit says there is a lot to take in at Boating Safety Day.



There will be numerous booths and demonstrations on boat operations equipment, safety equipment, and fire safety. You can learn to tie the standard nautical knots, and watch a throwable PFD demonstration that simulated an in-water emergency.

Also on hand will be Baltimore County Fire Rescue, the Department of Natural Resources Police and DNR's Scales and Tales, a program that provides the public with the opportunity to see wildlife close up. MR SUPP will host a family fun paddle board event to raise awareness and funds for Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Eastern Watersports will present paddle board safety demonstrations. Come out and have some fun in the sun, prizes, and food from local vendors.

The Sargent Marvin T. Haw Boating Safety Day is a great opportunity to learn how to be safe on the water. Novice boaters will gain a wealth of knowledge, while avid boaters can get a refresher course on what they have already learned. See you at Wilson Point Park on June 2.

*-Tim Sherman*



3rd Annual  
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Boating Safety Day

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### Scenes from Boating Safety Day 2017





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2. Wear your engine cut-off switch lanyard and your life jacket at ALL times. If the lanyard is removed from the switch, the engine will not shut off.
3. Assign a passenger to keep watch around the propeller area of your boat when people are in the water.
4. Consider purchasing propeller safety devices for your boat.

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## Schedule of Activities

### Demonstrations

- Greeting table
- Anchor procedures (Using sand box to show how anchor works.)
- Man overboard- Type IV throw/ life line throw (Oscar in water)
- Knot tying station / cleat tying

### Baltimore County Police- Youth & Community Services:

- EZ Child/ Elderly ID System

### Fire Department:

- Medical emergencies (CPR / AED)
- Electrocutation in water (Long Beach Marina)
- Live fire demonstration (Fire barrel w/ water pressure extinguisher)
- Simulated boat burn

### Natural Resources Police:

- Lagoon security
- Life Jacket demonstrations / Donning races
- Recruitment

### CG Station Curtis Bay:

- Small boat display
- Flare demonstration (Possibility? Orion?)

### CG Auxiliary:

- Safety exams (Land and Water)

### MR Sup:

- Paddle Board fun paddle

### Eastern Water Sports:

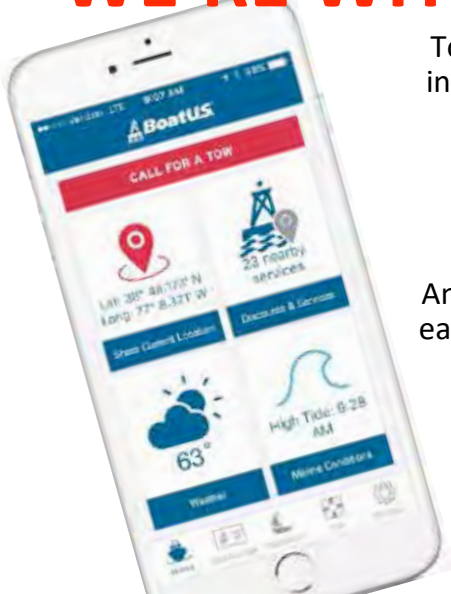
- Paddleboard demo



photo by Patty Haw



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**The Safe Boating Campaign** is led by the National Safe Boating Council, with support from boating safety advocates around the world. It is produced under a grant from the Sports Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

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## MTABC Fireworks By Ellen Honey

*Reprinted from Waterfront Guide 2018*

Prepare to get your sparkle on at dusk on June 30th! After a five-year hiatus, the Marine Trades Association of Baltimore County will be producing a dazzling fireworks display named the Marine Trades Association Fireworks in Memory of Raymond N. Porter and Jack Deckleman II. The event will take place on the water east of Wilson Point.

Because they are not burdened by land safety restrictions, barge based displays use larger shells causing higher explosions seen and heard for miles. Residents and boaters located on Hogpen, Norman, Hopkins, Dark Head, Stansbury and Frog Mortar Creeks will have especially great viewing. The 17 intense minutes of illuminations will feature high aerals visible from Baltimore County waterfront restaurants.

This year the display is dedicated to two departed MTABC members who had a significant impact on the association and the community. In the mid-nineties, it was

Ray Porter, who conceived the idea that a fireworks show would be a great thing for the residential and boating communities. For many years, it was Jack Deckleman's towing company getting barges into place.

Produced by MTABC and sponsored by local businesses and community donations, the event has become a major fundraiser for MTABC. The proceeds are a key component of charitable giving for the year. Locally, MTABC supports the Back River Restoration Committee, Wounded Warriors Day on the Bay, the Middle River Lighted Boat Parade, Baltimore County Marine Police Safety Day, environmental educational scholarships, the Stembridge Youth baseball program and various Christmas season donations. They also offered support to the New Jersey Marine Trades during Sandy.

Obviously production cost of a barge mounted fireworks show is very expensive and is dependent on the financial sponsorships of residents, boaters and businesses in the area. Support checks can be sent to: MTABC, P.O. Box 18137, Middle River, MD. 21220. For additional details, and major sponsor information, please call 410 335-7000.



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# Join the Back River Restoration Committee

Hundreds, if not thousands of boats lay abandoned along the waterways of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries causing harm to the environment. These vessels are often left by owners who can no longer afford the costs to maintain or repair their boats or the high expense of proper disposal. They threaten our waterways by blocking navigational channels and emitting fuel and oils into the water. The boat graveyards are not only unsightly, they attract more abandoned boats and these disintegrating vessels distribute debris into the Bay.



While there are programs in place through the DNR in Maryland and other states, there are many laws, technical and monetary restrictions with removing abandoned boats. Most have been stripped of any identifying features that could link them to their owners, half sunk and full of mud.

Back River Restoration Committee (BRRC), in their efforts to cleanup Back River and the Chesapeake Bay pulled in a dozen abandoned boats over the past year. The boats had been sitting for several years on Back River, Duck Creek and other coves. Expertise and caution were used to pull them from the mud and tow them to shore. With assistance from DNR and the Baltimore County Marine Police Unit, the boats were inspected for identifying numbers and tagged for disposal.



After the appropriate waiting period, the motors and fuel tanks were removed and the boats were ready to be destroyed. With a call to Benjer, Inc., a local contractor in Middle River, an excavator arrived and the demolition quickly began with pieces of fiberglass being loaded into dumpsters provided by Baltimore County. A joint effort between these organizations, volunteering their services and time, removed these eyesores and prevented 27,854 pounds of boat debris from flowing into the Chesapeake, piece by piece.



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# Safe Boating Courses Online

Soon the Chesapeake Bay will be crowded with families -- cruising, fishing, waterskiing, and sailing. New boaters and experienced hands will be vying for their piece of the fun. Whether it's your first season at the helm or you have years of experience, take time this spring to increase your knowledge of on- the-water safety and boat handling.

The BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water is a national leader promoting safe, clean, and responsible boating. The nonprofit provides innovative educational outreach directly to boaters and anglers with the aim of reducing accidents and fatalities, increasing stewardship of America's waterways, and keeping boating safe for all.

"We offer free online state boating courses to help reduce a barrier to boating and greatly increase your chance for a safe day on the water," said Assistant Director of Boating Safety Ted Sensenbrenner. "More than 1.4 million boaters have taken our online courses." The no-cost, state-approved course fits into busy schedules, allowing boaters to stop, and then start again where they left off any time of day or night, and is loaded with interactive animations, videos and photos to give boaters an education that goes well beyond the basics of boating. And, at the end of the course, you can easily print your state's proof of completion. To take Maryland's state-approved online boating safety course go to [BoatUS.org/Free](http://BoatUS.org/Free).

At this year's 3rd Annual Boating Safety Day Event on Saturday, June 2, 2018 at Wilson Point Park, 950 Beech Drive in Middle River, TowBoatUS Baltimore/ Middle River has paired with the BoatUS Foundation to offer Boating Safety Rides and On-Water skills training taught by licensed captains. The twenty-minute Boating Safety Ride will give participants an opportunity to learn how to properly fit a lifejacket, how to safely board a boat, and then to

take a short cruise around the lagoon to learn all about the necessary safety equipment that should be on board. The boat ride is free. All children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. BoatUS' On-Water Training course gives participants a chance to try boating for the first time or simply become more confident at the helm. Pre-registration is required. The course takes three hours to complete and costs \$149 per student. Professional training captains focus on shifting and steering, basic docking, and navigation on a close quarters powerboat handling course. Do you have a teen in your boat? Crew Camp may be what you are looking for. Join your teen aboard a training vessel for the three-hour course for just \$179 for the two of you. Every participant receives a Free Body Glove Float coat for completing the course. Go to [www.boatus.org/on-water/](http://www.boatus.org/on-water/) to register.

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# On the Waterfront

with George Waters

photo by Donna Bedell

## Stink Bug Infestation: Coming to a Town Near You

By Dave Waters

In the 1970s they warned us the Africanized killer bees would eventually arrive in the U.S., sting us all to death and then, even worse, register as Independents. They arrived in the 1990s but turned out to have even less of an impact than “Gremlins 2: The New Batch.” Now bark beetles are killing whole swaths of trees and our forests are more full of borers than happy hour at an actuary convention.

The latest devastating infestation is by Asian stink bugs, an invasive species now found in almost all U.S. states. It has no local predator to slow its buffet of American peach crops, almonds, apples, grapes, tomatoes; basically it is a sea of tiny, unstoppable vegans. The only thing worse would be if they could speak, shaming us carnivores in one wee but unified voice.

It is believed they arrived on the East Coast in a pallet offloaded from a Chinese ship, and like Annie from the musical, decided “I think I’m gonna like it here.” In some areas, they have reproduced in such numbers that homeowners have had their houses taken over. Scenes are described of people push-brooming hordes of stink bugs out the door

even as more fly right in. Somewhere Stephen King is smiling.

The idea has been floated to bring in the stink bugs’ natural nemesis from Asia, a certain wasp, which tends to eat the bugs’ eggs. But the wasp has no predator in America, either. This technique of solving one problem with a worse one is a time-honored one in the annals of invasive species history, and human romance, for that matter.

I have never been a fan, generally, of creatures which can be described as having a “long, straw-like appendage.” I am sure in mating season this goes over big, but the average apricot farmer is on my side. If only we could pit the killer bees against the stink bugs. It would get ugly, and it would stink, and I’m sure there’s a Congress joke in here somewhere, but at least bees are useful.

Like cicadas, stink bugs are playing the long game. There is no eradicating them at this point, although there is some evidence that birds are beginning to enjoy this new food source. Well, as is true with so many things in nature, love and politics, there is no accounting for taste.



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# Fun in The Sun

By L. Alan Keene

“When I was a boy.....”  
Don't you hate it when old folks start a sentence that way? You know what's coming. Another one of “life's lessons” about the good old days and how things aren't nearly as good today as they were back when.

Well, as much as I'd like to oblige, I'm not going to. You see, when it comes to boating and having fun in the sun, things are better today. We know a lot more. Back then, people didn't understand the potential hazards that over exposure to the summer sun can bring. We thought that the more sun we soaked up, and the darker our tan got, the better. Well, we were wrong, but we didn't know any better.

When I was that boy back in the 1950s, my best friend and I used to water ski on the Bohemia River behind his father's 17-ft Chris Craft inboard. Every summer weekend, from June through August, we'd ski from early morning 'til late in the evening, each of us trying to outdo the other. They were great times back then. But, with all those hours of exposure to the sun, I never remember using suntan lotion (that was for girls) and I almost never wore sunglasses. The sun was my friend and I basked in it.

Fast forward to 2018. We're about to enter another boating season out on the upper Bay. As a soon-to-be 73-year-old, I've been very lucky. My dermatologist tells me that all that sun exposure in my youth (I was a lifeguard, too) has taken its toll on my skin, but fortunately no skin cancer has been found.

Many my age and younger, though, aren't so lucky. Peg, my wife, who loved to lay in the sun without lotion, too, has had a melanoma removed from her arm and a friend recently had two removed. None had spread to other organs, thankfully, but they could have.

OK, here comes one of those “life lessons” that us old folks have earned the right to espouse.....**PROTECT YOUR SKIN! USE SUNSCREEN** whenever you're out on your boat. SPF 30 at least. Even though you're under the Bimini or wearing a wide brimmed hat, the sun reflects off the water. If you can see glare, the sun has a direct path to you. Knowing what we know today, it's foolish to risk skin cancer when protection is just a squirt or two away.

Now, back to the 1950's. Sunglasses? Sure, I wore them every once in a while, but mostly to look “cool.” If you squinted, and didn't look directly at the sun, we thought that your eyes would be fine. UV-B rays? Never heard of them. Cataracts? Only old people get them.



A cataract, for those not familiar, is a clouding of the clear lens in the eye, causing blurry vision at best, and blindness if allowed to progress untreated. It is often the result of ultra violet rays from the sun entering unprotected eyes.

In the 1990s a landmark study was done by Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute that explored the development of cataracts in Chesapeake Bay watermen. The results clearly showed that watermen who were exposed to higher doses of UV-B rays developed cataracts earlier and more frequently than those with less exposure.

The good news is that most sunglasses on the market today, even inexpensive ones, block 100 percent of those cataract-causing UV-B rays, greatly reducing the chance of cataract development.

Unfortunately for me, I didn't wear sunglasses. Even as an adult boater, I would often sail all day without eye protection. The end result was a cataract on my left eye that was so debilitating that it was like looking through wax paper.

Successful surgery, which involved the replacement of the damaged lens, returned my vision to normal, but the regular use of sunglasses could have prevented the need for that procedure.

“Life lesson” #2, then.....**PROTECT YOUR EYES! WEAR (UV protective) SUNGLASSES** whenever you're out on the water, even on overcast days. Lens color and darkness don't matter, as long as they block out 100% of the UV-B rays. Wrap-around glasses offer even better protection (and look “cooler” too).

So, there you have it... two important lessons that will help guarantee years of fun in the sun. But I feel like I've let you down somehow. Maybe this'll do it:

“When I was a boy, I had to walk 5 miles through the rain and snow just to buy milk and bread for the family. (Psst... Don't tell the kids, but the milkman and the breadman used to deliver straight to our front doorstep, when I was a boy!)”



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I was providing swim support for the Nation's Triathlon several years back, when one of the guys on a Fire and Rescue Boat I was paddling near called to me, "Why are you paddling with that board?" I smiled to myself. It is not unusual to get asked this question. To many, my paddle appears to be just a slender board. In retrospect, I should have just agreed with him. Instead, I tried to explain that my paddle was so much more than a common board. I said, "Well, it began life as a board, but within that board I saw a Greenland paddle and liberated it."

***"Still looks like a board to me. Or maybe a stick."***

"We call them sticks too," I said. But Greenland paddles are more than just sticks. The design originated in Greenland, where the Inuit have been refining it for hundreds of years. I use a Greenland style paddle because it works better for me than does a Euro-style paddle. The Euro-style paddle, like the ones other paddlers here are using, is a recent design. The most obvious difference between the two styles is the size and shape of the blade. While the Euro's large, wide blade grips a lot of water early in the stroke, allowing the paddler to accelerate faster, the Greenland does this in a gentler fashion. But the top speed of the two are only a few tenths of a mile per hour different. The Greenland paddle has other qualities that go beyond the Euro design. One is that the shape allows it to be used in difficult and changing seas. Suppose you get caught in a sudden storm. Using a Greenland, you don't have to be constantly looking down at your paddle to know precisely where your hands are on the paddle or to see which way the blades are facing. You know by the feel of your grip. This is important. With a Euro blade, the paddle can rotate when you loosen your grip. The loom is round and you have no reference points for determining which way your blade will be facing when you plant it. If conditions require you to brace, and the blade enters on edge, you will most likely capsize. But, with a Greenland paddle this is less likely to happen. First, the loom is oval shaped and you know when the paddle is being held properly. At this point I grasp the loom between my thumbs and forefingers, with my palms splayed out over the blade's shoulders, to demonstrate the proper way to hold the Greenland. "I know exactly how my blade is going to enter the water," I state. That

brace will be precisely delivered every time. I've done this enough that my muscles associate feel with blade position. Another quality of the Greenland design is that it provides use of the whole paddle. Most strokes require gripping the paddle at two points equidistant from its center. All the strokes are symmetrically expressed around the center point. But because the Greenland is a rigid paddle, it's paddler can use the paddle asymmetrically to leverage power. Cupping the paddle near it's end, and grasping the loom, I extend it it's full length, and sweep my kayak in a tight circle. "See how much leverage this adds to your stroke." It's the paddle's rigid backbone, it's soft, narrow blades with their elliptical shapes, that instill the qualities necessary for the extended sweep stroke. These qualities can determine the outcome of an encounter with a storm.

***"But still, it's just a stick. How good could it be?"***

"Good in what sense?" I ask. The answer to your question depends on which quality of the paddle you are addressing. The Greenland paddle is an outstanding paddle to learn rolling and sculling technique with. These are advanced self-rescue techniques that many sea kayakers learn early to increase their chances of survival on the water. The qualities of the Greenland facilitate the learning process. For example, I carved this paddle from a western red cedar plank. The wood is very light; yet it is strong. When used correctly, it is unlikely that loom will break. The paddle is buoyant. It always finds its own way to the surface when I allow it. Its blades are hydrodynamically shaped, much like an airplane wing. When swept through water on angle, they will generate lift. Capitalizing on this fact, and through much practice, a paddler can train his muscles to reflexively right his kayak following a capsize. From his upside-down position, his hands automatically rotate the blades to the proper angle and through a gentle sweeping motion and a twisting of his upper body, the blade "lifts" the paddler and his kayak into an upright position. Another way of visualizing this process is to see the paddle as a sort of sea anchor, about which the kayaker rotates to right the kayak. Either way, the blade performs the work. Most rollers can roll upright on either side, depending on wind and wave conditions, and usually with little spent effort. The symmetry of the Greenland paddle blade also makes it very effective when sculling.

Sculling is a technique where the kayaker lies on his back at the water's surface and puts his kayak on edge. He extends his paddle above his head and controls it by hands held across his chest. He sweeps the blade in an alternating motion while he changes the blades angle with each directional change. The lift created by the blade allows the paddler to rest with minimal energy expenditure. I have watched paddlers perform this maneuver in highly turbulent inlet water for long periods of time, resting before they again up-right their kayaks to stay and play a little while longer. Another skill, performed in calmer waters, allows the paddler to lie motionless on his back, kayak on edge, with the paddle extended out above him to form the crossbar on a "T". The paddle provides just enough buoyancy to keep his face above water. I'm told it is an effective technique for regaining one's energy, although I have never been able to do this maneuver myself. I have not seen the latter maneuver performed using a Euro paddle. The two paddles have very different qualities.



***"But it's just a stick. How can it possibly move your kayak forward as efficiently as a big blade?"***

"The blades on a Greenland have about the same surface area as those on a plastic paddle; it's just distributed differently. You are correct though; the Greenland blade is a little slower than a Euro blade on top end. Greenlanders prefer the Greenland for qualities other than speed. Because the blade is long and slender, force develops over a larger proportion of the stroke than it does on the Euro. Stated another way, the paddle doesn't suddenly "grab" as it enters the water. The stroke is a gentle buildup of power. Many older paddlers, particularly those of us with shoulder problems, prefer the Greenland paddle for this reason. It's easier on our joints. I know I certainly feel better the day after using a Greenland, than I do the day after using a Euro blade. I should also point out that the Greenland paddle allows the paddler to paddle with the loom held near his waistline. This can be advantageous in high wind conditions, because wind velocity is least near the water's surface. The narrow blade doesn't catch as much wind here as it does when held vertically.

***But it's still just a stick. So why do you prefer it?" the fireman asked.***

"It's more than just a stick. Each wooden stick is customized to its owners anthropomorphological characteristics using formulae that includes measurements such as the distance from the tip of the paddlers fingers to his wrist, the length of his fore and upper arms, his closed thumb-forefinger circumference, and other measures. These measures define the metrics that shape the paddle; loom length, blade length, shoulder height, etc. Upon this basic shape, we superimpose

our individual preferences. I have carved mine to give it qualities suitable to my paddling style. The loom is narrow to accommodate my smaller hand size. My paddle is shorter than most paddlers of my height would prefer, because it allows me to move it more efficiently when rolling. I prefer a larger shoulder than most, because this is where flotation lives; a quality I admire. I shave the blades thin so that they will flex during a stroke. I have also carved paddles for other people. I particularly like to laminate together woods of contrasting colors. For these paddles I alternate between red and white cedars, walnut, beech and birch. All are low density hard woods. I have made some paddles by laminating a thin piece of ash between multiple pieces of red cedar to create a strong backbone that runs the length of the paddle. Stronger, paddlers like this quality, because it reduces the risk of them breaking their paddle during a power stroke. On time I built two paddles with wide, Euro-like blades, so that I could accelerate quickly to catch an incoming wave while surfing. I could have used a Euro paddle for this, but laminated wood appeals more to my eye than colored fiberglass. Some other desirable qualities found only on Greenland sticks are hardwood tips and edges, carbon fiber inserts to resist abrasion, and ferrules that allow the paddles to be taken apart for transport. The Inuit attached pieces of whale bone to the tips of their paddles for the same reasons; to minimize wear and tear on their investment. Their lives and livelihoods depend on their paddles; and they paddle in one of the harshest climates on the planet. I once carved a replica Inuit paddle from a picture found in an old book. The paddle was unique because it had a spoon-like tip. I wanted to understand what this paddle's draw felt like. It was strange, and I still do not understand its usefulness.

***The fireman thought about this for a moment, then said, "Ah..., so you paddle with a board because you're a history buff."***

Exasperated, I nodded and replied, "Yeah. I guess I am."

# *The DiMontes – A Pennsylvania Boating Family*

We are a family of 5 – We started power boating on the Upper Chesapeake in 1998! A friend invited us on his boat on a hot July Saturday. My daughter was just 2 ½ years old and she’s now 22! We enjoyed it so much we bought our first boat the following summer. It was a used 22 ft. open bow Bayliner. Our children have so many wonderful memories of spending each weekend on the boat. They each picked a weekend where they could invite one friend; we also had “adult weekends” where we would invite our friends without the kids. We have often thought about all the friends, family members, work acquaintances that we’ve entertained over almost 20 years and believe me, it’s been a lot!

We started out boating in Perryville, MD at a small marina. We moved to Triton Marina on the Elk River, MD and now we are in another area marina. We now own our 2nd bigger boat. Every weekend, was a mini vacation! We’d pack coolers of food (hoagies, chips, snacks – but never chocolate! Chocolate melts and is a big mess to clean up! Before heading to the bay, we would also pack up beverages of choice, lots of water and tubes and tubes of sunscreen. We used all the brands. Some weekends we would cruise over to Chesapeake Inn or the Nauti Goose and tie up for a late lunch. I used to think how fortunate our children were to experience this every weekend.

Every 4th of July, we would be on the water for the best fireworks display over Havre de Grace Light House. Some weekends we would camp out with the kids, toting firewood for a campfire and tents and coolers with breakfast foods!

We bought a huge tube for the kids. They loved tubing off the back of the boat and it was fun to see who “would be

going for a swim”, meaning falling off. They next mastered water skiing, wakeboarding and knee boarding.

We bought fishing poles, tackle boxes and stopped for blood worms on most Saturdays. We caught and released – many cat fish, eel and an occasional clam! We had crab traps and the kids loved pulling them in at the end of the day. We went thru many different sizes of life jackets over the years and it has been fun watching the kids grow into the young they are today. My two sons, Anthony (29) and Mark (23), have already expressed a desire to own their own boats and I’m sure my daughter, Rachel (age 22) will also have a family boat. It has been such a good family tradition to “boat”. I always said to them – “you can’t marry between the months of April and October, because it’s Boating Time!”

The boat just took us away to a happy place where we could all be together, spending quality time and enjoying nature – we’d talk, laugh, share week stories and now we catch up on the weekends they are able to come out with us. It was fun to grab the binoculars and watch the eagles and blue herons and just nature. The Upper Bay is natural and just so beautiful. The water is clean, lots of sandy bottoms and little beaches to anchor up to and the water is usually very warm to grab a cold beverage and float. It’s fun to raft up with friends who have boats, catch up and relax. In today’s world, it’s nice just to unplug and unwind. Our commute from PA was about 80 minutes, but definitely worth it.

**Donna & Tony DiMonte Malvern, PA**

*photo by Christine Plummer*



***If you have a great story to tell about your experience on the Upper Bay, have photos to share, or want to be part of our Boat Dog column; please send contributions to [dave@upperbayboating.com](mailto:dave@upperbayboating.com) You’ll be entered to win a Free UBB T-Shirt or a gift certificate.***



# Boat Dog



*My "Benny Boy" on our pontoon  
near Turkey Point lighthouse.  
Jim Fulton*

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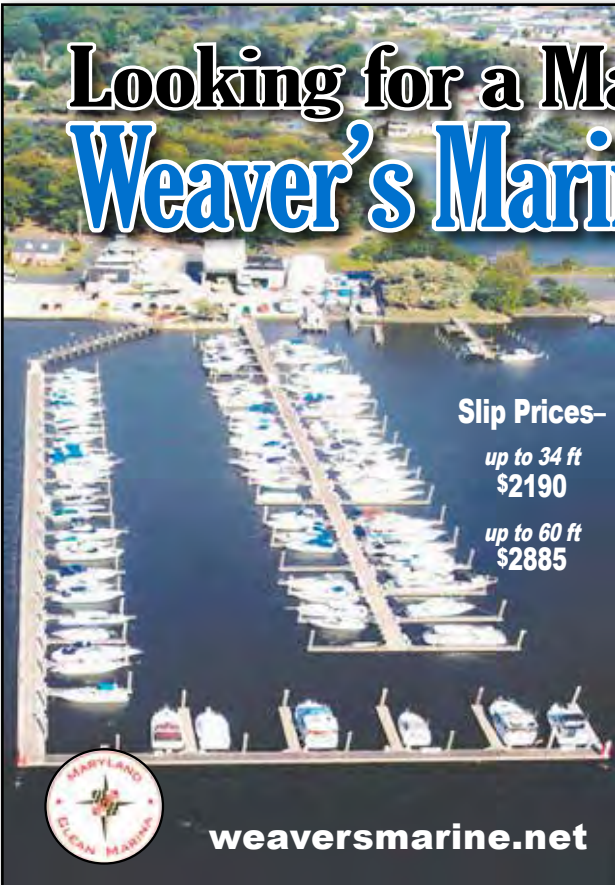
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## Three Boating Tips Just For Springtime

**A**cross America at boat launch ramps, the familiar growl of boat motors waking up from their long winter nap heralds the start of the boating season. But what makes boating, fishing or sailing this time of year different from all others? When it comes to safety, Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS) has three tips to answer that question:

The water is still cold. Darn cold. Even though the white stuff is gone and you're in a T-shirt and can feel the sun's warmth on your face, lurking beneath your boat's keel is water that could make breathing difficult or disable you in minutes after an accidental fall overboard. It's a good idea to wear a comfortable life jacket, and if solo, rig a self-boarding ladder that can be deployed while in the water.

Have backup plans. For a routine breakdown while underway, having an on water towing plan can help. However, most important is to leave a note, or "float plan," for friends or family members advising them of your expected return. That's because early in the season there are way-too-few boaters out there who could provide aid if something unexpected happened, and if no one knows where you are, you could be in a heap of trouble. A sample float plan can be found at: [BoatUS.com/floatplan](http://BoatUS.com/floatplan).

The number one reason why boats sink in the springtime is being in a hurry to get in the water. Check every engine hose and clamp. Remove leaves in scuppers and clear clogged cockpit drains. Check to see that freezing water didn't crack the sea strainer or seacock/valves. Go to [BoatUS.com/springchecklist](http://BoatUS.com/springchecklist) to get a copy of a Spring Fitting Out Safety Checklist.



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# Live Aboard

by  
Don and Gail  
Elwell

## The Discrete Charm of Chores

Okay, so anyone that's ever owned, sailed on, lived on, been around, heard of, or drawn pictures of a boat knows that there is a fairly steady stream of maintenance for which you've just enlisted the minute you step aboard. Some of it is, of course, the same sort of thing that any homeowner would recognize: weathered wood needs to be painted or replaced, things need to be cleaned, the broken stuff that you've been living with for 18 months needs to finally be dealt with, that sort of thing. There are of course things we don't have to do: There's no lawn, the flower beds are a pot on the stern, and re-roofing consists of opening up the bimini. But still, there are a host of things that have to be dealt with that most homeowners would never think about. Some things are simple: I can hose down my deck in the time it takes most folks to drag out the pressure washer and even think about hosing off the garage. Other duties are more complex.

I was thinking about this when I went up to empty the pee bottle this morning. Yes, I said pee bottle. Like a lot of livaboards, off-gridders, RV users and other eco freaks, we have a composting toilet. In the past, that entailed emptying the thing every three days or so when we were largely aboard. I finally got tired of it and designed and built a urine separator for the thing. For those of you not familiar with composting toilet design, most of the stuff that comes out of us is pee. Separate that out from the waste stream and the toilet gets emptied every ten days or so and not every three. . . .but you do need to



The Spring seems finally, FINALLY, to have come to the River.



Do we cook a lot aboard? See was a decade or so of use will do to a chef's knife? These were the same size.

deal with a sealed vessel of. . .well. . .pee. So every two or three days we unhook the thing and drag it up to dispose of properly in the bathroom (NOT in the bay, thank you. We have quite enough nitrates from agricultural runoff and suburban lawns). My point is: its not great, but it's far from onerous, and after a while this kind of weekly chore kind of fades into the background and rhythms of living aboard. There are others, of course. Laundry can be a chore in a small boat like this one. We cook a LOT aboard, and food has to be prepped and prepared.

Dishes have to be washed on a daily basis or they pile up and there's no

where FOR them to pile up. With a limited space, clutter is simply not an option, and you've just got to keep ahead of it. It seems kind of odd when I start cataloging the number of little things we do to keep our floating home happy and tidy.

But it's a tiny price to pay, and now that warm weather is finally coming, the Ospreys are back and the trees along the Middle River all all popping with leaves and flowers and mornings, when the light comes over the treeline and illuminates the wheelhouse all in gold, it's a great reminder of why we do this, why we live here.

So the Spring is finally here it seems and the Marina is suddenly full of folks working on their boats, looking at their boats, wishing they had other boats, and, in general, jonesing to get out on the water. This week we're installing a new set of 100AH batteries for our electric drive and making as ready as possible to get out on the water. In coming weeks, we'll be adding more solar panels to "Tesla's Revenge" and finalizing the electric propulsion. We really want to get out there. This winter has been way too long.



Our noble ship's cat, Magellan, plotting out courses for us for Spring.

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*Don Elwell*



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