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Upper Bay Boating

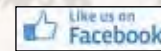
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Boating with Dad

Father's Day is almost here and you know what that means; it's time to celebrate the Dads in our lives! Fathers work hard and, often, thanklessly all year long. They support silently, lead by example and make small sacrifices that often go unnoticed. They keep their families humming smoothly along. Don't miss this opportunity to thank your dad, and make it a day to remember. Yes, that means getting out on the water with your dad.

I remember my first Father's Day -- watching all the boats go by behind my parents' waterfront house. My daughter Katie just arrived on Memorial Day weekend and I just sold the boat figuring we wouldn't use it with an infant in our lives. While we enjoyed spending time with the family, something seemed to be missing in our lives.... Oh yeah -- the boat! Fast forward to the next year, we had the baby out on our new boat making my second Father's Day that much more enjoyable. A year later when Daniel came along, we had him out before he was a month old. They were great memories for sure.

When my dad bought his first boat back in the 60's, all those great times aboard the Hanky-Dor-y are still etched in my mind. The first boat show, months of weekends spent at marinas looking for the right boat, summers at the yacht club, even laying under the boat sanding and painting. No

matter what, the shared moments are still treasured to this day. Unfortunately, I was never able to thank my father for sharing all that time with us on the boat while experiencing similar times with my own family. He passed away 29 years ago, just a few months before Katie was born. I am just happy we have the memories, please make yours this June 17th.

All of us Upper Bay Boaters are so lucky we live near this beautiful body of water, or within a reasonable driving distance away. Almost like being on vacation all summer long. Bonds between different generations that are made on the water make that investment in your boat worthwhile. I know my parents were happy to spend those hard-earned dollars on an activity that would keep the family together, and I was happy to do the same for mine. My daughter lives and works on the Bay, and I'll bet this Father's Day as she and her husband look out over the Bay, Katie smiles and says, "Thanks Dad".



My son Dan.

Fun in the Sun in HdG

By *Wendy Gilbert*- Features Editor

Now that the season has truly fired up, why not visit Havre de Grace?

This upper Bay gem is popular with the boating crowd for many reasons. During a quick run from Charlestown to HdG last week, I was encouraged by how busy folks have been. It seems like everyone is getting ready for the summer. The sound of lawnmowers, electric saws and hammers comingled with the burps and hums of outboards up and down the shore-line.

Kids in strollers, grannies in wheelchairs and everyone in between were out to view the sailboats, fishing skiffs and the abundant waterfowl from the promenade. The decking has been replaced in many spots and many more were well underway. I chatted with one of the worker bees who was set up on the point.



"I'll bet that's about the nicest view you've had on a job this year."

He chuckled, smiled and said, "Yes, ma'am it is. And you have no idea..."

"Enjoy today."

"You do the same."

Enjoy today.

The folks working on the Concord Point Lighthouse were doing the same. It was a bit hot for popping in bricks and whacking weeds, but it's what you do. Last year at this time, it was rainy and cool. This year a most welcome run of sunny days is ushering in the boating season.

It amazes me sometimes how much work goes in to making our summers so much fun. Restaurants, tourist attractions, museums, parks – all are spruced up and ready for us to come visit.

Decks have been scrubbed, popular selfie portrait props are freshly painted and the writers here at UBB are ready to entertain and inform you all season.

My girlfriend and I had lunch at the Vintage Café on Washington Street. What a hidden treasure! We love

our waterfront haunts, don't get me wrong, but when you need a soda fountain, you need a soda fountain!

There's plenty of great places to eat, shop, stroll and just relax in Havre de Grace, so drop on by.



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Low water hazards

By Wendy Gilbert – Features Editor

Unlike most folks who have fun in the sun, boaters must pay attention to a myriad of conditions, including the tides.

Many times, I (or my captain) have forgotten to check the tides, been fooled by snow melt, droughts or storms.

Early season boaters, small craft adventurers and novices need to be aware of the hidden hazards that the ever-changing upper Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries can present.

Here is a list of things to keep in mind:

Keep a proper lookout and look what's behind and aside -- not what's just in front of you.

Stay well clear of logs, root wads and even whole trees. They often allow water through them, but can catch and entrap paddlers underwater or entangle lines on boats.

Pay attention to the weather and the tide. A receding tide could leave a boater "stuck" at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Boat with a buddy, especially in paddle craft. Have at least two boats and a plan if the party is separated. Always let a friend or family member know where you're going, when you expect to return, what clothing you're wearing, and who's with you.

Scouting ahead is worth your time. Determine the safest course around sandbars or fallen trees and large root wads.

Read the water. Where is there a bit of whitewater? Where does the water eddy? How is the water riffing? These water characteristics indicate what's below the surface, a sense of depth and gives key information on how to safely navigate.

Go with your "gut feeling." If something doesn't feel right, listen to your gut. When in doubt, portage (drag or carry) the boat over and around an obstruction. Skill level and confidence can mean the difference between an easy run and a potentially dangerous one.

Take special care when operating near the banks, where many of these obstructions lie just below the surface. Always wear a life jacket when on the banks. Banks are often unstable.

Learn your boat's capabilities and weaknesses. Spend time in your boat, beginning in calm waters. Learn how to "make it happy" in a range of sea conditions.

Build redundancy into the operating and safety systems, whether they are an extra paddle or a handheld VHF radio.

Study a good map or chart of the water trail section you plan to explore. If you expect to carry a handheld or fixed-mount GPS, save several key waypoints in it for important navigation markers and points of interest.

Know where your trip will take you and where you can find a safe harbor or takeout in case of mishap or bad weather. Make sure you understand how to identify and avoid any hazards marked on your map or chart.

Allow ample time to complete your trip under daylight hours, taking weather and water conditions into account. Even if you must alter your schedule, having an initial plan will help you figure out how to finish your trip safely.

Check the weather, before you go and during the day while on the water. Check the forecast on television and/or online beforehand, including checking the current data available through the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System (CBIBS).



Carry a VHF radio—handheld or fixed-mount—with bands for receiving forecasts from NOAA's National Weather Service while on the water. Where cell phone coverage is available, call the CBIBS buoys (1-877-BUOYBAY) for near-real-time wind, wave, and current conditions in their locations.

Check the tides and currents. They are especially important if you are paddling or rowing or trying to make a tight schedule under sail or power.

Gear Tips:

Always wear a properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket that is appropriate for your vessel.

Dress for the day and be prepared to get wet. If the weather is cool, dress warmly in layers and bring an extra set of dry clothes sealed in a dry bag for emergency use. If it's hot, find ways to avoid heat exhaustion, like taking breaks in shade and drinking plenty of water.

Always wear boots or shoes to avoid foot injuries, which are painful and liable to become infected. If you are going to wade and want to wear sandals, make sure you choose models that offer protection for your toes and the tops of your feet as well as the soles.

Use sunblock! Skin cancer is a real danger but easily preventable with sunblock, appropriate clothing, and common sense.

Wear a hat on bright, warm days as well as cool ones.

Take along a windbreaker or rain gear, including pants or bibs with suspenders to keep your lower body dry.

Carry at least one signaling device on every trip: a flashlight or strobe, flares, horn/whistle, cell phone, VHF radio, bright flag, or mirror.

Biting insects can be vicious during the warmer months. Bring repellent.

Other essentials: a first-aid kit (know what's in there, understand how to use it, and keep it stocked), plenty of drinking water, and sunscreen and lip balm.

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Be a Member of the ABYC by James Bedell



As another season fast approaches we all have plenty of work to do. Varnish needs touching up, float switches need replacing, and canvas needs scrubbing. Many of our yearly DIY tasks are mundane matters that can be safely done at home with little to no expertise. But some projects require the in depth knowledge of a professional. That's not to say you can't do it yourself, it just means you need the right information and the right tools. Nowadays it is easy to get all of the information and instruction you need from various forums, DIY sites, and YouTube, but we all need to be wary of misinformation.

Take your canvas for example; many cleaners will get it clean, but many common boat cleaners are too harsh and will cause specialty fabrics to wear out prematurely. When in doubt, the best bet is to skip the forums and go right to the source. Call or email the manufacturer for their recommendations about what products are compatible with theirs. Often times the customer service departments are very happy to help; they want to keep happy customers coming back to their products time and time again.

I want to be clear however that boating forums can be an indispensable way to access information and opinions and to find proven solutions to common problems. Just be sure to verify information you get and do your own due diligence to ensure you don't make things worse. Specifically when it comes to electrical and engine repairs, it is vital to have accurate information before blindly jumping in. Your dock-mate may be a nice guy, but if he isn't a mechanic don't just take his word for it when effecting engine repairs. Always consult a repair manual, many of which can be viewed and downloaded online or purchased through a dealer. It may cost you a few bucks, but engine work is not a place to save a penny by refusing to buy the instruction manual.

Similarly, electrical work is not something to undertake lightly. It is crucial to properly wire any component with the appropriate materials. Always use the proper gauge and color wire for your application, not just whatever happens to be nearby. Make sure that anything in the bilge, especially bilge pumps have heat shrink connectors or heat shrink tubing over standard crimp terminals. Working in a busy marina repair yard I have seen DIY wiring projects that range from just plain silly to downright scary. Bilge pumps always seem to be the worst cases which is alarming considering how important they are for the safety of your boat and passengers.

By its nature a bilge pump sits in the lowest area and the wires often contact standing water so please, be sure the wires are well sealed with heat shrink tubing or connectors!

If you are beginning a project and don't know exactly how to wire your component, which wire color or gauge to use, or what procedures to follow, there are resources available to help. The best resource is the American Boat and Yacht Council's (ABYC) list of standards for yacht construction and maintenance. The standards are the accepted rule for boat construction for boat builders, insurers, and captains nationwide. Any boat sold in the U.S. initially met these standards, so when you do DIY repairs it is important to follow these standards to maintain the quality and safety of your vessel. Traditionally, the ABYC has been a resource for marine professionals, but they have recently begun to focus on recreational boaters to help DIY boaters make safe and effective repairs to their vessels. The ABYC DIY website has videos and instructions on wiring, engine repair, valve adjustment, and more! Just visit <http://abycinc.org/mpage/diy> for more information.

If you do frequent repairs or DIY projects, consider joining the ABYC as a recreational member for only \$185/year. This gives you full access to ABYC standards, manuals, videos, photos, and publications. For anyone doing their own work, it is definitely worth it to provide needed guidance and ensure all of your repairs are made to the highest standards. I fully believe in DIY work and knowing your own boat and systems. Just be sure to be safe and diligent when making repairs and your boat will be safe and reliable for years to come. Do it right the first time and you'll be able to spend your days relaxing in the sun instead of redoing past projects.

Disclaimer: I am not personally affiliated with ABYC; my workplace is a member of ABYC and employs ABYC certified technicians. I believe in the mission of universal safety standards for yacht construction and repair and actively recommend the use of the standards to DIY boaters to promote safe and informed do-it-yourself work. I receive no benefit or compensation for recommending membership of ABYC.

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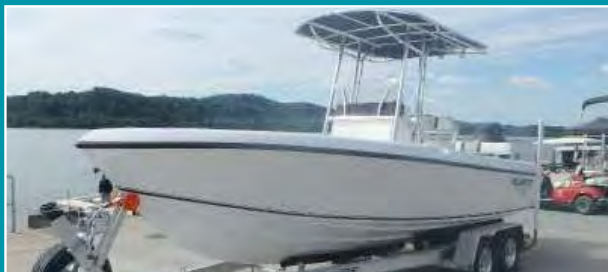
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Perch Time

By Tim Sherman

Admittedly, I am a white perch fishing fanatic. I don't get involved with the spawning runs, and it's not because I am a fair-weather fisherman. I believe spawning fish should be left alone, not caught by the 5-gallon bucket full. Rest assured, when perch leave the headwaters and make their way to the marshes, rivers, and the bay, I will be in hot pursuit.

There are so many places to catch perch and they respond to bait and lures. Dundee and Saltpeter Creeks are great places to find perch along the edges of grass beds. In Middle River, you'll find them hanging out around piers.

There are so many places in the Patapsco to find them that the spots are seemingly endless. I have caught white perch from Fort McHenry to Sparrow's Point. Worms on bottom rigs, grass shrimp below a bobber, inline spinners, small plastic minnow jigs: the techniques seem endless as well.

I try to keep the fun in perch fishing. Perch are hard fighters for their size, but you won't realize it if you are fishing with medium power rods and 10-pound-test line. I gear up with light and ultralight rods coupled with 6-pound-test. You will truly appreciate a perch of quality size or a double header. I fish with lures. In my style of fishing, I don't have time to cut bait or bait hooks. I run from spot to spot looking for schools of perch, once found, it's a full on, casting or jigging affair.

I have a game plan for different areas. If I am fishing shallow areas – marshes, shorelines – I'll fish more horizontally. I rely on inline spinners, small rattle traps, and beetle spins and simply cast and retrieve them. If perch don't like the beetle body, try threading on a small twister, or paddle tail. When targeting docks, I use a bobber and small plastic jig. I don't use the stereotyped red/white bobber. A slip bobber works better. It is more

easily adjusted for depth.

When I move out to deeper water I use more vertical tactics. When I say deeper, 8-feet is when I start jigging. I cast out, let the jigs hit bottom, and jig all the way back to the boat. Sometimes it's a guessing game as to the jigging action. Schools of perch are often aggressive and will attack any sort of movement. Other times

they are super finicky and want a slow-moving bait. Should I spot a school of perch on the depth finder, it's as simple as opening the bail and jigging vertically. Again, the perch will tell you how they want it.

I tie my own tandem rigs for this technique. I use and arm's length of 10-pound-test fluorocarbon (for abrasion resistance) with a loop knot tied so that I have a long and short end. I tie a 1/8-ounce jig head on to either end. Each gets some sort of soft plastic minnow imitator. I carry tiny flukes such as the Lunken City Fin-S Fish, twister tails, and small paddle tails.

You wouldn't think that color would matter to a perch ... but it does. I carry several colors of each type of plastic. Natural bait fish hues, white, chartreuse patterns, and even pink. Having a partner or two along helps narrow down what body type and colors are working. With the tandem rig, you can have several colors flinging at once. You wouldn't think a perch would be that, but they can be.

This is my time of year to hunt down white perch. They provide so much action that it's hard not to be a fan. No matter what your style of fishing is; when you find the perch, it won't be hard to catch them. Hope to see you out there.



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Why Do So Few Boaters Wear PFDs?

Every year over 500 recreational boaters drown while boating on our nation's waters. Every year over 500 loved ones don't return home to their families after a day out on the water. Every year this senseless loss of life repeats itself..... senseless because 400 of those deaths didn't have to happen. Conservative estimates by the U. S. Coast Guard indicate that over 80 percent of those drowning victims would be alive today had they worn a personal flotation device....a life jacket.



By L. Alan Keene

These are not new statistics. Boaters, like you and me, have read (or avoided reading) articles like this one every season for as long as we've been boating. The Coast Guard has been preaching the same sermon for over 50 years. Plain and simple, life jackets save lives.

The question that begs to be answered, then, is why do so few boaters (less than 10percent) choose to wear one with so much evidence supporting them? Why do the same people who wouldn't think of driving without buckling up or let a New Years day pass without changing the batteries in the smoke detector.....why would these same people take such an unnecessary risk?

Some simply don't understand the danger. The twice-a-year fisherman who ventures out on the Bay in his 10-ft. pram may not realize how quickly chop can grow on the Bay with a change in wind or tide direction. He may not realize how quickly his boat can swamp, leaving he and his buddy swimming for their lives. Or the novice sailor may not understand how a 10-knot wind can become a 25 knot wind in a matter of minutes, leaving him with too much sail up and too little knowledge to bring it down. A recipe for disaster.

Many complain about comfort issues. "Life jackets are hot, bulky, and uncomfortable to wear", they say, "and they mess up my tan." While this excuse may have made some sense a decade ago, it doesn't today. The term "life jacket" is a misnomer. Most PFDs today aren't jackets at all. They're inflatable vests and belts that are thin, light

weight, and almost unnoticeable when worn. Many of the new inflatable belts today are no bigger than a fanny pack.

Some others don't wear a PFD because they're convinced that if they fell overboard and there was no one aboard to offer assistance, they could swim back to their boat or even to a distant shore, if their life depended on it. But, while most boaters are competent swimmers, it's very easy to underestimate distance

and overestimate ability. Even the strongest swimmers can exhaust themselves fighting the strong tidal currents of the upper Bay.

Still others believe that it couldn't happen to them. If they're careful, they convince themselves, and don't take chances when moving around on deck, then the likelihood of going overboard is minimal. And while that may be true, a rogue wave or sudden puff can hit when they least expect it, sending that extra-cautious boater over the side.

There's another more powerful reason, though, that most boaters are reluctant to admit. It involves the fragile male ego and how we, as experienced boaters, view ourselves wearing a PFD.

The life jacket for many male boaters, consciously or not, represents weakness and timidity. Its purpose is to protect children and help make non-swimmers feel more secure around the water. It's certainly not intended for experienced boaters like ourselves, except under extreme weather or race conditions. To be seen motoring out of the marina on a pleasant summer afternoon wearing a PFD would be embarrassing to many of us. It signals fear and insecurity, and the male ego will have none of that.

As irrational as this stigma is, it's imprinted on the psyches of powerboaters and sailboaters alike. Common sense says to put on a vest or belt every time you leave the dock, but common sense hasn't been able to compete against the appearance of weakness. Isn't it time for rational thinking to prevail? Isn't it time for experienced, upper Bay boaters to lead the way and help remove the stigma?

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Destination: Kent Narrows

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

When most people think of the Chesapeake Bay they subconsciously divide it into three parts. In my mind the Lower Bay is from the mouth of the Potomac River south to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. This area is mostly in Virginia but includes a few isolated Islands in the Maryland portion of the Bay. Probably Smith Island being the most popular. The Middle Bay region starts at the Virginia line and extends north to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Popular boating destinations like Annapolis and Kent Island form the northern boundary. And the Upper Bay would be all the Bay north of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to such northern areas like Havre de Grace and Northeast.

Each area has its own wonders as well as unique challenges. Numerous creeks and rivers can be explored in each area. The lower Bay can be quite open and large grassy shallow flats surround many areas making it difficult to explore in larger vessels with deep drafts.

The open water of the lower Bay also can be a challenge. At the Bay Bridge Tunnel an incoming swell pushing in against an outgoing tide can create waves on the calmest of days. Mid Bay boaters can visit numerous Ports like St Michaels, Cambridge, Deale and Solomon's Island. Many of these areas are just a day's cruise away for upper Bay Boaters. As upper bay boaters we're not strangers to shallow water. The Susquehanna Flats that guard such ports as Havre de Grace and Port Deposit have claimed many a lower unit and stranded countless boaters waiting for a rising tide.

On the boarder of the Upper Bay and Middle Bay sits an old waterman's port called Kent Narrows. Fifty years ago it sheltered one of the largest Oyster and Crab fleets in Maryland. In fact much of the recent waterfront development was done on a bedrock foundation of Oyster Shells. A waterman's Marina and numerous shucking and picking houses lined the waterfront. Old established restaurants



like the Fisherman's Inn and the Anglers Restaurant kept us all well fed. Fresh shed soft crabs and fried whole belly clams were just two of the specialties we enjoyed. Kent Narrows is just a clam's squirt from the Bay Bridge on Rt. 50 on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Waterman's Marina can be seen south of the Kent Narrows Bridge on the "Island Side", Stevensville/Chester. The Kent Island Yacht club is right next door. Grasonville sits on the eastern side of Kent Narrows.

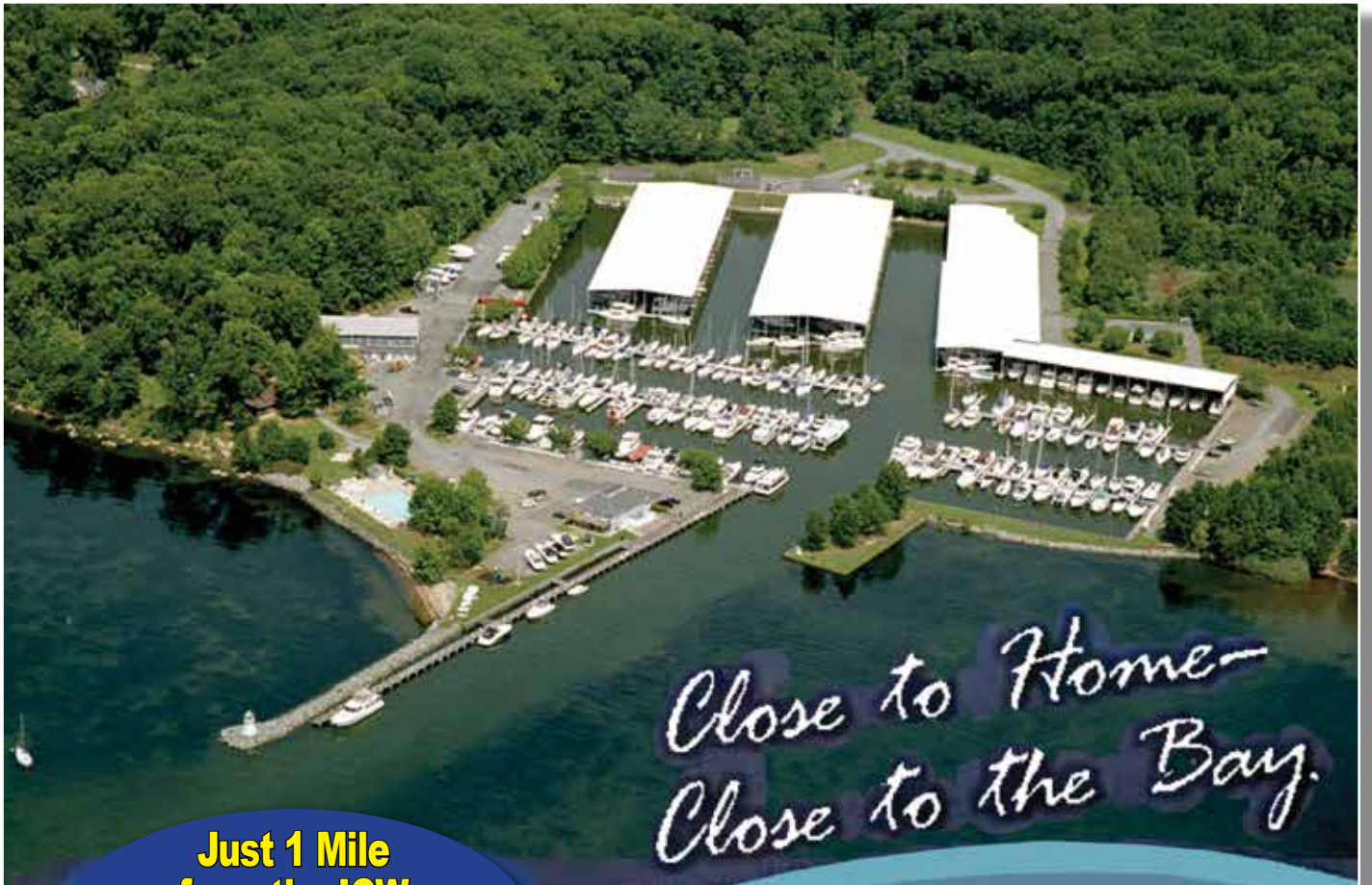
To get there by water is even easier than by land. It's your first right as you go up the Chester River or if you're coming up from the south just run north up the eastern Bay. Can't miss it. Be careful at night though. The channel markers are not always visible with the backdrop of restaurant and hotel accent lighting. And a breakwater guards the south side from southerly swells and Ice that can ravage boats in the winter. If you're coming in from the north and you draw over four feet watch the wind and tides. The channel can be a bit shallow if you stray.

Though most of the old shucking houses are gone some great restaurants and Tiki Bars have taken their place. Some great

hotels are also available within walking distance to all the action in case you don't feel like sleeping on the boat. There are also two fuel docks on the north end of the Narrows, Piney Narrows and Mears. And as if this isn't enough a brand new boat motel has just opened. Now your boat can be as comfortable as you. And right next to the Boat Motel is a great ramp with plenty of parking operated by Queen Anne's County. You do need a QAC permit though.

Kent Narrows might be one of the hottest destinations on the Bay right now. Ironically it's the only place on the Bay that ISN'T a destination for me. Its home! You can find me nestled in my slip right next to the Big Owls Tiki Bar. How convenient is that! Come on down and look us up.

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Benefits of Boat Ownership

By Doug Dawson

Boating is not only your mental escape, it is also proven to be beneficial to your family's health. All boaters, both power and sail, know this, but sometimes we need to be reminded. Now, more than ever, we need to find relaxation and fun, so keep boating at the top of your list.

With the price of fuel creeping up again and the never-ending choice of accessories for boating, overspending is easy, especially when visiting boat shows or planning vacations; but, there are some ways both power boaters and sailors can cut back and get more enjoyment while boating on the Upper Bay for much less.

We've listed a few and are sure you will be able to add more to the list.

Tour Your Corner of the Bay

Usually when boaters think of going on a boat trip, most assume that they have to go long distances. They plan for their destination and the trip becomes the necessary time to get there. Few stop to realize that your corner of the Bay could be your destination. Why spend so much time getting to a distant destination, when there is so much to see and do right in your own back yard?

Why not consider touring the Upper Bay this year and marina hop, taking in all the local events and activities you can. There is a rich history to be learned and each town hosts activities. Each leg of your trip could include stops for swimming, snorkeling, fishing etc.

While touring, observe the topography; so, you will be able to navigate at night. Particularly at sunset, pay attention to the shoreline and groups of lights; so, you can identify where you are and where you want to go. We like to write these landmarks on our charts.

Then, when you are out at night, it is easy to identify your current location and destination. There's lots of beautiful cruising at night. Just be sure to keep your running lights on, monitor your electronics. Also, engage your crew to keep their eyes peeled for moving lights, as well as floating debris.

Marinas aren't the only destinations. Sometimes, the protected cove around the corner can be the destination, weather permitting. Just raft boats together, party, swim, play cards, tell stories and enjoy your cockpits and swim platforms, on the water. Make new friendships and carry on that camaraderie for decades. Take canoes, kayaks and snorkel gear to occupy the kids.

One year, we took our cruiser and anchored out. A friend flew in with his float plane while our son and his friend scooted about in the dinghy, and the girls swam. The adults enjoyed each other's company sharing hors d'oeuvres. A great playground for both families—just a short distance from the marina.

Diamonds in Your Own Back Yard

Each marina has varying facilities that include tennis, pools, shuffleboard, bars, restaurants, beaches, small boat rentals etc. and they know all the local attractions like golf, museums, cinemas, historic sites, libraries, shopping etc. As you visit each of the marinas, participate in everything they have to offer. Most facilities are included in your seasonal or transient dockage fee; so, pretend you're a visitor and enjoy your marina and the other marinas in the immediate area.

Create an Event

Why not organize your own events? Gather a few boaters on your dock and organize a Barbeque using the marina's Barbeque facilities with picnic tables. You can bring a boom box, or turn up a boat stereo (or several boats' stereos) for extra free entertainment.

Once, we were locking through on the Rideau Canal with half a dozen boats, when the power failed in the big 2005 blackout. We were stranded, so we made it an event. Each boater turned up their stereos on the same radio station then we all proceeded to sing and dance on the decks entertaining the spectators lining the top of the lock looking down on us. We had a wonderful time. You don't have to spend a lot of money or travel great distances to have fun on your boat. Just use your imagination and create events that are inexpensive, all-inclusive and fun for everyone. Take pictures so that you can relive them over and over again for years to come.

Create an event out of teaching your First Mate and Crew the six most useful knots to be used aboard any boat. You can hold knot tying competitions

with the crews from other boats for fun prizes. Compete tying the six knots blindfolded and/or under water at your anchorage. It will not only result in hours of fun, but also teach a skill to be used by all forever. Free fun, free training.

Go Out for Dinner

Pack up your favorite dinner and idle ten minutes out, then anchor or drift for a dinner date, while watching the sun set. It's better than an expensive restaurant and nowhere near the price. Each dinner will be a memorable occasion.

Try rafting or tie-ups as it is called in some areas, with several boats. Choose a location where you are protected from waves and wakes to anchor securely. Tie so that moving from boat to boat is easy by aligning all the swim platforms. Have each boat prepare their specialty for dinner and share by passing from boat to boat or congregate in the largest cockpit. We've done it many times and enjoyed every rafting.

Going out for dinner this way ensures that your food, your company, and the atmosphere are first class and costs are minimal.

Use Your Boat More

You've already invested in the boat, so using it more isn't as costly as spending recreation time elsewhere. Your initial cost is already paid and all you have to add is food (and you have to eat anyway) and a little fuel. The more you use the boat, the less each trip costs, because the average cost keeps decreasing.

Save Money on Fuel

Since last summer, the price of fuel has dropped, but it still requires a fat wallet to fill most power boats. In the last issue of Upper Bay Boating, we covered 10 of 27 ways to save money on fuel.

Enjoy the Toys

Anchor the boat and enjoy the scenery by canoe or kayak or stand up paddle board. You'd be amazed how peaceful it is paddling along the shoreline observing mother nature at her finest. They aren't heavy or very expensive; but provide hours of pleasure.

Other Peoples' Boats

For a change of scenery and a new experience, offer to crew on another boat. In exchange take them out on your boat. If you are really a skilled boater, you could even deliver a boat for a friend and have a whole new boating experience.

We've cruised on a friend's 41-foot yacht in the Bahamas and brought it back to Florida for them. It opens up new experiences, new waters and different boats to your boating life without any further investment.

Get a Discount

All money saved gets you and your family boating more. Why not get a discount on your insurance? Taking a course with the Power and Sail Squadron will get you a discount with some insurance companies.

Another discount worth investigating is with credit cards. Some cards offer points, that can be redeemed for fuel purchases.

Summary

These are a few of the economical, fun things you can do to enjoy your boat more for less. With a little brainstorming, you can probably come up with more. Happy Boating.

Tying and Using Knots e-lesson and Trimming your Boat e-lesson are on the www.BoatingWithDawsons.com website under eLessons on the menu bar.



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Easier Anchors Aboard

By Montana Grant

Not every boat captain has a powered anchor system. For much of the nautical boating world, power is supplied by the captain or crew. This means the bigger the anchor, hopefully, the bigger the manpower.

Most of my Bay experience with anchoring has been in 10-80 foot of water. If you anchor in deeper waters, a windlass is a good idea. The routine is to use a fish finder to mark the structure, or location, where you want to anchor. Knowing the location of the transducer is helpful when dropping the anchor.

Anchor placement is critical if you are trying to hook up along an edge, structure, or lump. You also need to consider the tide, current, and wind so that the boat swings and holds where you want to fish. We have all bottom fished out the stern of a boat where one corner catches fish like crazy, while the other corner is fishless.

If you plan to swim or just anchor up, pick your spot and go for it. If you are along the rivers, be aware of submerged trees and debris. Scout the area with your electronics before setting. Anchors dropped into debris, heavy rocks, and snags will make retrieval more difficult or impossible. During one really low tide, a friend of mine found several anchors hooked to a junked car! The wreck also was full of jigs, hooks, and lures.

Retrieving your anchor is another adventure. Big boats require large, heavy anchors and chain. Generally, you want the length of chain to weigh the same amount as your anchor for a good set. This will also be critical for using this anchor retrieval method.

Here is the simplest way to bring your anchor aboard without ruining your back. Use a "net ball" attached to a short line and stainless-steel ring. Practicing with this technique is helpful. You can also view folks demonstrating this on YouTube.

Net ball anchor retrieval systems are available for sale or can be constructed by a DIYer. You need a stainless-steel anchor ring, heavy stainless-steel snap, 1-3 feet of nylon rope, and the net ball. Connect the ball to the snap with secure knots or fittings.

Your net ball size will depend upon the weight of your anchor and chain. This will also determine the length of your chain.

| BALL SIZE | ANCHOR/CHAIN |
|-----------|--------------|
| NB-40 | 40 pounds |
| NB-50 | 75 pounds |
| NB-60 | 130 pounds |
| NB-75 | 240 pounds |

When you are ready to pull up your anchor, take the anchor retrieval system and snap the ring onto your anchor line. The nylon rope between the ball and snap needs to be 1-3 feet long.

1. Start your engine and power at 3-10 knots. Travel in a direction to one side, or the other, of your anchor line, and avoid driving over it! Watch the anchor line as it comes along side. Attach the line to your rear corner cleat, or side/ bow cleat and keep the boat moving forward.

There is a lot of discussion about tying your anchor off to the rear cleat. I remember several years ago when 3 NFL players were fishing in Florida.



They tried to drag up their snagged anchor and secured the anchor line to the rear cleat. Their boat flipped and sank. They drowned. There may have been other factors such as speed, weather, or whatever. Many of us learned to never tie off to the rear cleat. In a strong river current, tide or weather, things can go south in a hurry before you could untie the line.

Try tying off from the starboard or port bow cleat. Pull the anchor line at an angle. When the ball surfaces, turn toward the ball and put the engine into neutral. Now you can retrieve the floating anchor easily. You can also simply hold onto the anchor rope and use the cleat for support. If something goes wrong, simply let go. I have also seen boaters run a loop of anchor rope through the center of the cleat and use a stick, or picket pin to hold the loop to the cleat. If a problem arises, pull the pin.

2. The net ball will slip down the anchor line and submerge. The next time you see it, the anchor will be floating with it! You want to drive forward until the ring is all the way down to the anchor blades. The chain will be on the near side and the anchor on the other. Therefore, the chain and anchor are the same weight.

3. Now stop the boat and simply pull the floating anchor alongside. Stow the anchor on a rubber mat, bucket or tub to keep the line from tangling or scratching up your boat.

If for some reason the anchor fails to surface, steer an angular circular course while keeping the anchor rope tight until something gives. This is when attaching the rope to a bow cleat is a better idea. When in strong rivers, talk to the locals and listen to how they adapt. If you hooked the submerged car you may lose your gear. The net balls are also handy for an emergency bumper, marker buoy, or throw float.

Net balls can easily be inflated using a compressor with a long inflation needle. I have also seen boaters use this system to deploy their anchor for cleaning and straightening. Once untangled, they simply retrieve and coil the rope in their storage for the next deployment.

Practice makes perfect when using anything new or different. Train your crew and make sure everyone is on board. Watching YouTube videos is a great way to witness this technique. Modify and adapt to your craft and needs. Whenever a boat is under power, docking, or performing a task, such as anchoring, everyone needs to alert and on board!

Stay safe and anchor smartly!

– Montana Grant

For more Montana Grant, visit his blog at www.montanagrantsfishing.com.

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.

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Some Upper Bay boaters might not know the marina was first built in 1965 by the developer of Joppatowne to help sell waterfront property. It opened in 1966. Back then, the place was called Gunpowder Cove Marina. Don Rogers started working there in 1969 and became the general manager. Over the next four decades Don helped develop the business into one of the premier full service marinas in the Upper Bay. Gunpowder Cove Marina was a mainstay in the local boating community. The popular marina had a good reputation and reasonable rates. There was even a waiting list for slips. Many Rumsey Island waterfront homeowners, marina slip-holders and fishermen fueled their boats at the marina and/or had service work done there. Transient boaters from as far away as Delaware and Pennsylvania often docked overnight and bought gas and other necessities. The marina was the only place to get gas on Harford County waterways for miles.

Then around 2004, the family business was sold to MarineMax, but the venture did not go as planned. Unfortunately, the marina closed in the summer of 2015. Some say MarineMax just wanted the Sea Ray franchise. In any case, the community was stunned by the sudden closure. Slip holders were caught by surprise. They had to scramble to find somewhere else to keep their boats. It was a frustrating time for many. People wondered whether the marina would ever re-open amid rumors about new apartments taking over the 12 acre site. Such a change would surely re-shape the neighborhood.

Enter local entrepreneurs Mark and Barbara Gorrera. The newly named Joppatowne Marina re-opened in October 2016 with the civic-minded owners eager to re-establish the marina's once thriving business. Among the first moves the savvy couple made was to bring back the highly regarded marina manag-

er Don Rogers to help put Joppatowne Marina back on the map. Don Rogers could never be mistaken for Marty McFly stepping out from behind the wheel of a shiny aluminum DeLorean, but the classic movie title fits the situation. It is "Back to the Future" for this popular upper bay port.

Located inside the Amtrak train bridge just beyond Mariner Point Park, the marina features 270 wet slips with water and electric service and a total of 300 high and dry racks, some inside and some outside. There are clean bath houses, picnic areas with grills and the gated marina has 24 hour surveillance. Joppatowne Marina has a repair shop, a parts and supply store, sells 89 and 93 octane gasoline, and offers pump out service. They have a new forklift and a new 25 ton travel-lift. There is even a freshly stocked tackle shop on the dock complete with live and frozen bait including bloodworms and minnows. As of June 1, 2018 live eels will be available for anglers wanting to drift for striped bass at the lumps east of Poole's Island. Expert angler Dave McCollum runs the tackle shop along with his other marina duties. Dave enjoys meeting people and loves to talk fishing. It's what he does. Look for the American and Maryland State flags flying above the new tackle shop. Rest rooms are available for customers.

Last but not least, Joppatowne Marina sells fishing boats. They are dealers for Striper Boats rigged with Mercury outboards and Release Boats rigged with Yamaha engines. If you want to buy or sell a boat, Joppatowne offers Boat Brokerage service too. And that's not all! There are a number of fun events scheduled for this summer at Joppatowne Marina. Slips are still available for the 2018 boating season. See the website for more information at www.joppatowne marina.com or go to their Facebook page.

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MTABC Fireworks June 30th

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.

Celebrate National Fishing & Boating Week

National Fishing and Boating Week is a national celebration, an event that highlights the importance of recreational boating and fishing. NFBW will take place on June 2-10, 2018.

Boating and Fishing are fun, stress-relieving activities that you can enjoy with your family and friends anytime. Here are just a few reasons why you should get out on the water and start enjoying these activities:

- * **Connect with your Family;** Family fishing is a great way for family members of all ages to connect and have fun.
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Gray's Road Clean-up

Where does all the trash in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay and the Ocean come from? Speaking to many boaters and fisherman, nobody has seen trash fall from the sky. I would like to think that the majority of boaters and fisherman would appreciate and be aware of the significance of clean boating, trash free waters and dispose of their trash properly. So where does all that floating debris come from?

Unfortunately, it comes from careless individuals and businesses that think that that one piece of trash they drop on the street or let escape from an open dumpster won't make any difference. The problem is that it does. All those one pieces of trash add up to millions of pounds of trash swirling around our streets and alleys, being washed down storm drains, directly into our waterways and eventually into our most precious natural resource, the Chesapeake Bay.

On Saturday, April 14th volunteers came out in force, more than 100, to work with Back River Restoration Committee and Key Brewing, to clean up the storm drain ditches along Grays Road in Dundalk. This is the second year that Key Brewing, a local craft beer brewery sponsored the cleanup of this mile-long road that leads to their brewery and Tap room. Key Brewing had volunteers working and also had their grills fired up all day to provide delicious food and refreshments for volunteers. Volunteers spent 4 hours cleaning up the area, which resulted in 7.99 tons of trash (scale receipt), 42 tires and a truckload of scrap metal.

On Thursday, April 26th, Family Chiropractic – Dr. Richard Santangelo, for the 2nd time also, sponsored a cleanup in Nottingham on Stemmers Run. Dr. Santangelo, who is a regular contributor to BRRC, provided a lunch and exams to volunteers. Trash collects along the streamline of Stemmers Run from the busy Belair Road Corridor and eventually makes its way to Back River and then the Chesapeake Bay. Volunteers worked to cleanup 2,100 pounds of trash and included patients and friends of Family Chiropractic, local residents and businesses and Kimco Property Management. Kimco has been working with BRRC, hiring cleanup crews and installing fences to stop dumping at Fullerton Shopping Center.

Are these Business owners doing it for publicity or personal gain, No, they see a problem and work to address it. They work together

with BRRC to help organize volunteers who take their own time to clean up the trash others have created. It is because of conscientious volunteers and contributors, including Dave Bielecki of Upper Bay Boating that we are making a difference in the health of the Chesapeake Bay.



If you would like to volunteer, contribute or participate in one of our fundraisers, please contact BRRC at savebackriver@gmail.com. Upcoming fundraisers include Rockin' on the River on June 3rd, Golf Tournament at Rocky Point Golf Course on June 22 and Rockfish Tournament on September 8th.

– Karen Wynn

Back River Restoration Committee

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By the Numbers in 2018

566,022: Total number of BoatUS members nationwide

28 feet: Average length of a BoatUS member’s primary boat (BoatUS members own two boats on average)

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70,535: Total number of annual requests to TowBoatUS 24-hour dispatch centers for on-water assistance including towing, battery jumps, fuel drop-offs, tows home and soft ungrounding services

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SOS Spring Skills Practice at Camp Wabanna

On April 21st, SOS (Singles on Sailboats) encouraged participating sailors, including new members, to actually try some important safety skills on land at Camp Wabanna. The skills included shooting off flares, putting out fires, throwing lines, getting floatation devices to someone in need, and using non-pyrotechnic means

of summoning help. We also had an interactive display of foul weather gear, hats, gloves, boat shoes, and life preservers. Plus, a demonstration of navigation apps on a tablet device was given. Comments from participants indicated that they appreciated being able to practice in a fun environment.



On the Waterfront

with George Waters

photo by Donna Bedell

Canceling a Subscription is No Easy Phone Call

After the election of 2016 I thought I wanted to stay on top of the news more than ever, which just proves how little I know myself. I subscribed digitally to several papers of various political bents, I downloaded apps. Recently I decided to cancel my subscription to the one I read the least, let's call it the Wonk Gazette. They do not make it easy. While the conversation below is not an exact transcription, it does truthfully convey the overall experience.

Wonk Gazette: "Hello. How may I provide you with excellent service today?"

Me: "Today's no good for me, but I would like to cancel my subscription."

WG: "All right, sir. Let me just confirm some information. I see you have been a loyal subscriber for 15 months. We are having a promotion right now, and I can let you skip a payment for an entire quarter."

Me: "That's a great deal for somebody not cancelling their subscription."

WG: "This is our most popular discount, sir, a savings of \$45."

Me: "You are witnessing my most popular feature, which is my patience. Can you cancel my subscription?"

WG: "Most people..."

Me: "Is there a number of times I need to ask you to cancel my subscription before you'll do it? Because just

give me the number. I'll ask it five times or eight or whatever. What's the number?"

WG: "If you find that your busy schedule does not permit reading the WG at this time, I can put you on a hold for this quarter and resume your access in the summer."

Me: "Look, it's nothing against your paper. It's a quality read. I have just, over the last year, realized I am defenseless against the siren suck of Facebook. Turns out I'd rather watch a tiny hedgehog eat baby corn than read about how the world is losing its mind. You feel me?"

WG: "Would you like to upgrade to Premium Slackoff? For just \$35 more a month you keep your subscription but we block access to your account. So it's guilt-free."

Me: "I just want you to cancel my subscription. I can say it in my high school German if you prefer."

[Puts me on hold for two minutes; a ploy designed to make the weak hang up]

WG: "O.K., sir, I have cancelled your subscription. I just have one more question."

Me: "Shoot."

WG: "Would you be interested in hearing about our introductory New Subscriber rate?"



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Bowleys Quarters VFC Safe Boaters Courses 900 Bowleys Quarters Rd. Middle river, Md. 21220 Cost is \$35.00 Call 410-800-8420 to register **June 9&10; 23&24; July 21&22**

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 May issue

Maryland Waterman's Assoc. Rock Fish Tournament June 8-10 410-216-6610

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MSSA Fishing Tournament June 15-17 www.mssa.net

Fireworks Display on June 30th hosted by the Marine Trades of Baltimore County- Can be viewed by boat on most parts of Middle River, and from land at Wilson Point Park 410-335-7000

Kids Fishing Derby June 30, starts at 7:30am Fort Smallwood Park 9500 Fort Smallwood Road Pasadena MD 21122 410-222-0087 www.pasadenasportfishing.com

Concord Point Concert & Fireworks July 1 5- 9:00 Havre de Grace www.havredegracejuly4.org

Mighty Minnow Fishing Tournament July 14th at Joppatowne Marina 510 Riviera Dr. Joppa, Maryland, 21085 (443) 981-2469



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Tyler's Cove to Deal Island

A solitary hand was floating there in the water, just beneath the surface, beckoning us to enter the canal. No, wait. I'm getting ahead of this story.

In the wintery months of 2014, some friends and I began planning a series of kayak outings that would allow us to paddle from the upper reaches of the Elk River to the lower most point on the Eastern Shore. By April, the plan was formalized enough to begin the routes and over the 2014 season, we completed 15 full day paddles in 8 separate outings. The fall of that year brought a series of storms that fell mostly on weekends. Having paddled as far south as Harborton by early October, we decided to postpone the remaining routes until Spring 2015. I chronicled the first five of these outings last year. The sixth outing began with our setting shuttle vehicles on Deal Island, the final destination of that weekend's paddle. It was mid-July. The skies were clear and the forecast for the weekend looked great. Everyone was anxious to get moving and get on water before the morning temperatures started to rise. It was 7 AM and we were headed for Tyler's Cove.

The drive from Deal Island took nearly two hours. It is mostly over back roads that pass-through marshland and forests of dying trees, choked by the increasing salinity that accompanies rising sea level. At Meekins Neck we passed a small, white, one room church with crisp, brightly painted green shutters. I later learned this is the old Saint Mary Star of the Sea, the first established Catholic Church in Dorchester County. To me, the very fact that this community has taken efforts to preserve this piece of history speaks volumes about its character. It was going to be an interesting paddle.

The boat ramp at Tyler's Cove was empty. As we began putting our kayaks in the water, I spotted a hand floating palm up. It took a few moments to process that the hand was a pale-yellow rubber work glove. It must have fallen off one of the workboats. But to see it floating there, beckoning, gave everyone the creeps. No one bothered to pick it up and put in a trashcan. No one wanted to touch it. We all just worked around it, ignoring it as we loaded our kayaks for the days outing.

The ramp at Tyler's Cove launches into a small boat channel leading to Fishing Creek. We followed it to the cross channel, then headed east into the Honga River. The waters were very calm that morning and there was little breeze. It started getting warm around 10 AM and by noon we were baking. Like ducks in a pond, one kayaker rolled to cool off, then another, and so it went until we reached the large concrete span of the Hooper's Island bridge. There we rested, ate our lunches, and enjoyed the only shade we would encounter that day.

Hooper's Island bridge is a modern two-lane, arched concrete span standing some 50 feet above water. Beside the bridge lay the remains of what appears to be an earlier version. At the time we couldn't determine if

these remains were from a bridge, or ferry landing, or what. Someone mentioned that it may be the remains of the original bridge that was destroyed in the 1933 hurricane. The old roadbed leading to the bridge abutments was covered with heaps of oyster shell, probably dumped there when the new bridge was being built. Tom Horton has written about these bridges. His articles contain local history interspersed with humorous descriptions of how the turnstile bridge that served here after the hurricane, but before today's structure, operated. He also talks about the politics that brought the new bridge into existence and why it was so aptly given the nickname "The Bridge to Nowhere." They are worth reading.

We crossed under the bridge and paddled south along the western edge of Middle Hooper Island. Solid land here is about 4 feet above sea level, give or take a yard. It's easy to imagine that it must take horrible beatings during hurricane season. As we passed by Hoopersville, we noticed new homes along the shoreline. People continue to build here, despite the rising waters. Ties to this area must be very strong indeed. We all wondered just how much longer these islands, this town, will survive.

The Hooper Island chain is one of the longest settled areas in Maryland. The original inhabitants were the Yaocomico people, a sub-tribe of the Algonquin. Legend has it that the first English settlers purchased the islands for five woolen blankets. The Yaocomico tribe's historical record disappears in the late 17th century and it has been speculated this has to do with infectious diseases borne on the traded blankets.

Not surprisingly, the predominant industry on Hooper Island is seafood. The island is the original home of one of the world's largest seafood processing operations; Phillips Seafood and Restaurants. It was established in 1914, but it's headquarters have since moved elsewhere, leaving behind a handful of smaller crab processing plants to support the local economy. As of this writing, most of these have closed due to an inability to obtain seasonal workers. The future of Hooper's Island does not look promising. Rising sea level is causing Hooper's shoreline to recede at a rate of 4 feet per year. A combination of Mother Nature's harsh character and a changing economy tied to political whim, all seem to be working against the islands. It seems inevitable that soon these islands will be lost.

As the afternoon wore on, we began looking for a place to camp. Below Hoopersville there are few trees. Marsh grasses provide the only ground cover. Using Google Earth images, we identified a beach on the southern-most side of the lower island that looked large enough to support our small group. After a few false landings, we found that beach and it turned out to be a great camping area. Winds had built a small berm that would safely separate our camp from the bay. That same southerly wind would help keep the mosquitos in the marsh and away from our camp. Perfect. And, by the way, we previously sought permission from the owner to camp here.

We pitched tents and began setting up camp. Afterwards, we still had light, so someone suggested we explore Thoroughfare Cove and the lower island's north shoreline. Lower Hooper Island, as it turns out, has more area than we anticipated. By the time we returned to camp, the sun had set. We enjoyed the remainder of the evening eating our rehydrated dinners, sipping wine, and marveling over the nature of the white sands upon which we camped.

By evening the winds were coming from the southeast and beginning to build. Offshore waves were changing and small whitecaps began to form over the shoal in front of camp. We sat and watched high tide come and go. Our camp would be safe for the evening. I was awakened several times that night as the wind whipped the tent fly against the sides of my shelter.

During one of these awakenings, I noticed a fully lit cruise ship motoring its way down bay to the sea. It was beautiful, all lit up against a dark, starry sky.

Possible break for a two-parter here

The next morning, as we stood on the beach attempting to gather bearings for the days paddle, Jay said, "There's a shark fin. (pause) No, it's a dolphin – a pod of dolphins." Five to six dolphins rhythmically broke the water's surface as they passed on their way to the Bay. They were followed over head by a squadron of Pelicans. We took the sightings to be good omens.

We launched at 8:30 AM, heading into a 6-10 mph wind, to cross the Honga River. The crossing was done by compass navigation, because our next waypoint, the Hooper Strait light, was not visible from camp.

Hooper Strait light is a 40' metal framework that once supported the Hooper Strait Lighthouse. It is hard to imagine, given the complete absence of boat traffic we encountered, that this was once a heavily traveled boat route. Steamers, cargo ships, and barges used the strait to access population centers along the Nanticoke and Wicomico rivers, as well as Deal Island. With the advent of other forms of cargo transport, traffic fell and the expense of maintaining a manned lighthouse became cost prohibitive. The lighthouse was removed. It now resides in the St. Michael's Chesapeake Bay Mariner's Museum. Only the pilings remain to mark the place where this historic landmark once stood guiding sailors at this junction of the Honga, Transquaking, Nanticoke, and Wicomico rivers.

After a few group photos, we paddled to shore for a short break. There, Gina broke out a copy of William Cronin's *The Disappearing Islands of the Chesapeake* and began reading to us about Lower Hooper Island. The marshy island upon which we had camped once was home to a settlement named Applegarth. Following the oyster boom of the 1890's, Applegarth's population grew to more than a hundred people. It had a post office, several stores, and an elementary school. Eventually, erosion and storms would extract a toll on the community and the island would be abandoned. Farmers would continue to graze sheep there, but even that ended with the loss of the bridge that connected the Lower and Middle Hooper Islands. Today, the only habitable ground on the island surrounds a small patch of trees near it's center and a strip of earth on the north shore where the islands cemetery remains.

At Bishops Head, we realized we had been paddling in a wind shadow. Starting across the river, waves built to 1-1/2 – 2 feet. We were in for a fun, though tiring, 4-1/4 nm crossing.

We landed on what in retrospect is Deal Island's public beach, although we did not know of this at the time. Two women quickly approached us out of curiosity and struck up conversations. They wished to know more about our



image from "Weathered Paddle."

trip; where had we departed from, where were we headed, and about kayaking in general. We chatted as we ate our lunches. In exchange for this information, the women answered some of our questions. On both days of our paddle, Navy F-14 Tomcats had flown a CAP over us. From their calls on channel 16 we could tell they were keeping an area clear for missile testing, but we could not tell where the area was. "Is Bloodworth still used for target practice," we asked. The answer was no. The island has been silent for several years. The missile testing area referred to was probably out over open ocean and would give us no cause for concern.

Our plan was to paddle south along Deal Island's western shoreline. But having paddled this area before, several in our group suggested that a more interesting route was via the Deal Island inner passage. The day was still young, so this sounded ideal.

The inner passage is formally known as Laws Thorofare and it is broken up into an upper and lower thorofare. The channels of the Thorofare were indeed interesting. At low tide the banks are high and steep. Rather than abruptly dropping from grass level to the water, the banks have distinct tiers. We speculated this may be due to the root structure of the overlying grasses, or to differing soil compositions that eroded differently. But our thoughts were just that – speculation. We could come to no conclusions. I wish we had a geologist in our group.

Coming out of the lower thorofare and into Northeast bay we began seeing fish weirs at the mouths of each of the small tidal inlets. We have encountered weirs before, but not in such abundance. Again, we could only speculate as to what was being trapped here. Fish? Eels? One of our paddlers commented that eel was a big export item to Asian countries. The question will have to remain unanswered until we pass through on our next outing.

We entered Wenona Harbor mid-afternoon, loaded up kayaks on our left shuttle vehicles and began the 2-hour trek back to Tyler's Cove. Those of us who have paddled in the Hooper Island, Deal Island region have many fond memories of the area. On this trip, the highlights for me were: a mosquito-less camp on a perfect white sand beach; our first dolphin sighting; Pelicans; and visions of an island with a rich history. I can state that having paddled these islands and talked with the people who live there, the events playing out in today's news hold a much more significance than had I not experienced them. If there is one thing that all of the Chesapeake voyagers have learned in our travels, it is that life on the Islands of the Chesapeake cycle. It blooms, flourishes for a while, dies, then reforms elsewhere. Some islands live longer than others, but with time all will rejoin the bay. So be it. We must enjoy them while we have them.

Save a Kid's Life This Summer

Become a Life Jacket Loaner Site

A simple way to save a kid's life is to ensure they have a life jacket when they go boating, sailing or fishing. But sometimes, it's not easy to borrow a right-sized life jacket when an infant or young teen comes aboard. Marinas, boat and fishing clubs, waterfront businesses, organizations or other groups that serve boaters can help by becoming a BoatUS Foundation Life Jacket Loaner site.

Becoming a loaner site is easy by applying at BoatUS.org/Life-Jacket-Loaner. There is no cost to set up a loaner site, and there is never a charge to borrow a life jacket.

Approved locations will receive a kit containing 12 child-sized life jackets with

sizes from infant to youth, as well as signage and a local publicity kit. The non-profit BoatUS Foundation, funded by donations from the more than half-million members of BoatUS, replenishes the supply of jackets as wear and tear takes its toll.

The only task loaner sites have is to track life jacket usage with an easy clipboard sign-out system and provide the Foundation with periodic feedback to help keep the life jacket supply in good condition.

The program currently has more than 550 life jacket loaner sites across the US that collectively loan out children's life jackets more than 140,000 times each year. Since 1997, three children's lives have been saved by a BoatUS Foundation loaner life jacket. To learn more, go to www.BoatUS.org/Life-Jacket-Loaner. A short video on how to select a right-sized kid's life jacket at BoatUS.org/Life-Jacket-Loaner/Fit-Video.



You can help children get right-sized life jackets for the day or weekend with help from the BoatUS Foundation Life Jacket Loaner Program.

–Boat US Foundation



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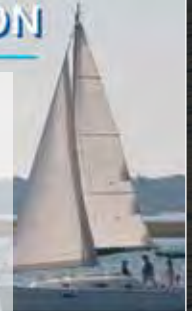


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Live Aboard

by
Don and Gail
Elwell

V Berth Bedding from Futon

Liveaboards, in my experience, fall into two categories: 1) We have enough money to do this, so we're doing it, and 2) We don't have any money so we're doing this. We rather fall into the second category.

One of the greatest discomfitures of living aboard boats tends to be bedding. The reasons are many: weirdly shaped spaces mean traditional mattresses often simply won't fit (and often won't even go belowdecks). A thick mattress takes up space you don't have, and, let's face it, most boats are regarded even by their manufacturers as pleasure craft, intended for only temporary habitation at best, and if your drunken friends wind up passing out on a three-inch mattress, so be it. None of the preceding are conducive to a good night's sleep.

So, it was with Tesla's Revenge. We've been sleeping in the V berth on 70's era foam which was, to say the least, beat down. It was long past time to do something. After casting about and looking at the amazing expense of foam, let alone the cost of custom cushions, we decided to take matters (and mattresses) into our own hands and try to find a mattress we could modify for the space.

Both being a fans of futon mattresses (okay, so we're old hippies), we thought we'd bite the bullet and see if we couldn't modify one to fit our V berth bedroom. After a bit of casting about, we managed to find an inexpensive, American-made (how the hell did THAT happen) futon mattress at a Big Lots for just under \$100. The conversion proved to be surprisingly simple, and the results surprisingly comfy, so we thought we'd share.

The whole process took only about half an hour and I'm amazed we hadn't tried it before. We slept on the new bed last night, with plenty of padding and no low spots. This really worked well. We're contemplating trying the same idea for new galley cushions. Give it a shot. There's really nothing to it.

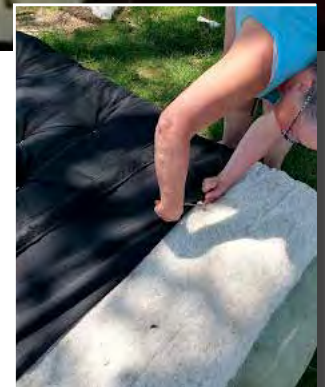
We got lots done today on Tesla's Revenge, setting in new snaps on our roll-up plastic glazing (okay, so I miscounted when we installed it and wound up just screwing some of it in place), and putting in new lifelines to replace the nasty plastic covered stainless-steel cable ones we inherited with the boat (the new ones are an aramid, and just as strong). The new battery boxes showed up yesterday, and the new batteries Tuesday. We're getting there, folks.

Don and Gail Elwell And first Cat Magellan Aboard the EV "Tesla's Revenge"

www.thefloatingempire.com
lifeartwater.blogspot.com



Here are the two halves of our old, beat to crap V berth cushions and a new, American made futon mattress from Big Lots



Peel back the cover, clipping the places where the mattress is sewn through the cover.



Using a long carving knife and scissors, cut away the excess mattress stuffing. Some of these mattresses are just filling, some have a foam center. Either way, the process is the same.



Cut the excess mattress material away to match the original cushions.



...and stitch the mattress cover back in place.



So here's the cut mattress with the cover stitched back into place, folded over the removed sections.



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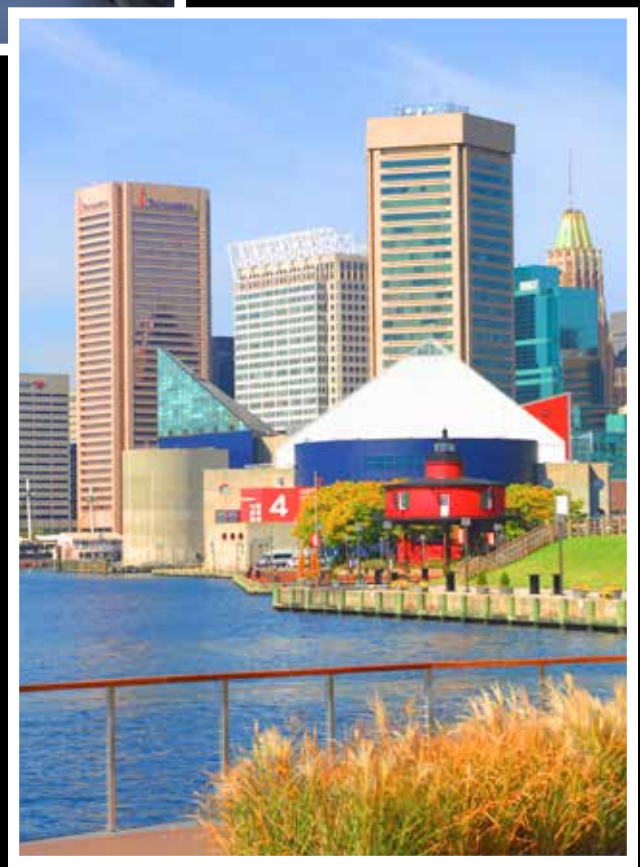


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