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photo by Joel Kelley

Upper Bay Boating

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Summer Boat Trips

Almost every weekend we take our boat to the same cove to anchor out for the day, unless we have a bigger trip planned. We like our “spot”, but sometimes it can be fun to try a new anchorage location. Even if it’s just down a river a few minutes further, or on the opposite side of the bay, it can be fun to drop the hook somewhere different with new scenery and water to explore.

Over four hundred years ago, Englishman John Smith and a small crew of adventurers set out to explore the Chesapeake Bay. Between 1607 and 1609, Smith mapped and documented nearly 3,000 miles of the Bay and its rivers. The Chesapeake has served as a backdrop for key moments in our nation’s history, including the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.

Chances are you boat near some well-known (or not so well known) historic waterfront locations. Most waterfronts have a rich history as a fishing town or historical landmark. Most of the Upper Bay museums in North East, Havre de Grace, St. Michaels, and Baltimore are just a few hours away for

most of us. Find a location worth exploring and make it an educational outing for your kids to learn about the history.

Sometimes the best boat trips are the completely unexpected – where you don’t quite know where you are going, but you’ll know it when you get there.

It can be fun cruising to new nearby rivers or coves and then dropping the hook. Or just decide to spend the night at a new marina so you can check out the town.

The Upper Bay has so many hidden jewels besides the well-known destinations. Make plans to explore some new destinations this summer. And don’t forget to share your adventures with our readers.



Happy Boating, Dave



Cecil is not the Only Seasick Sea Serpent!

By **Wendy Gilbert**- Features Editor

As a small child, I loved watching The Flintstones and The Jetsons cartoons. Me and my siblings were always goofing around and playacting after the shows were over. We drove self-propelled rock cars and chased robot dogs all over the yard. In the summertime, once we got to the club pool, it was time for pretending we were characters from a lesser-known show called Beany and Cecil. We loved Cecil the seasick sea serpent. He was adorable!

We would try to snake up and down through the water like the Loch Ness monster, upon whom I'm sure the creators based our lovable and very awkward friend. Pretending we were nauseous was easier than talking with Cecil's characteristic lisp, but we gave it a whirl. It was a welcome change from Marco Polo!

Really being seasick is no fun at all. If you or one of your guests need some help, here are a few ideas to try:

Tried and true

Keep your eyes on the horizon. Motion sickness occurs when your brain and your inner ear are in conflict about whether or not you are in motion. For some that happens easily and suddenly. All you have to do is glance down at your instrument panel and bam! You've got an instant case of the queasies. And once it starts, it's almost impossible to stop. And in that instance, if you can, do stop. You (or your passengers) are not likely to suddenly stop being nauseous just because you'd like them to.



Acupressure

Motion sickness bands are effective for some by applying continuous gentle pressure on a pressure point that some find very effective. To do it yourself, just use your thumb to press your inner arm three finger widths (a couple of inches) down from the crease on your wrist. Hold for a few minutes.

Ginger

Dad used to give us kids a glass of ginger ale and a bowl of chicken noodle soup with a few saltines when we were feeling queasy. Now, we know why. The ginger in the soda aids digestion which eases the symptoms.

You can enjoy a few slices of raw ginger root before you get onboard or perhaps try a ginger supplement. Although with all the bad press supplements and vitamins are getting lately, I'd stick with the real thing.

There are several prescription and OTC (over-the-counter) medications available as well. Be sure and read the directions and warnings as some interfere with blood pressure and other medications.

Too bad poor old Cecil didn't have these options!

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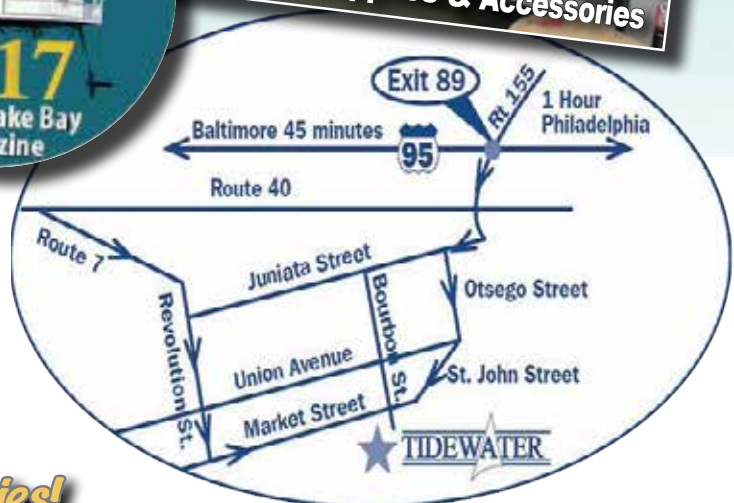


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Maryland Crab Dip- Variations on a Theme

By Wendy Gilbert – Features Editor

Needed: Excellent picnic item to share. Where to begin? Ponderous cookbooks? Pinterest? Perhaps a simple Google search or a flip through the stacks of Food Network magazines in the guest room?

Knowing myself, I could spend hours aimlessly wandering through pages, both print and cyber-like for side dishes. I needed a focus and like a beam of first day light across the bow, a brilliant idea sparkled across the watery waves of my brain – Crab Dip!

Unmistakably Maryland, the salty spice blend of Old Bay commanded my attention. Focus attained.

I quickly found Old Bay's Maryland Crab Dip recipe, which after perusing another 20 or so recipes, is pretty much the beginning.

In case you don't have it, here it is.

- **1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened**
- **1 cup mayonnaise**
- **2 teaspoons OLD BAY® Seasoning**
- **1/2 teaspoon McCormick® Mustard, ground**
- **1 pound lump crabmeat**
- **1/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese**

Other ingredients you could include:

- **Onion • Spring onions • Tomatoes • Corn**
- **Garlic • Pepper • Cayenne Pepper**
- **Hot sauce • Pepper sauce • Worcestershire**
- **Lime juice • Lemon juice • Basil • Dill**
- **Parsley • Chives • Sour Cream**



Alternate types of cheese:

Pepperjack Parmesan, grated
And let's not forget the cheddar varieties. Mild, sharp, extra sharp, Vermont, Aged Vermont...

The mind truly boggles.

Once you decide on your ingredients and cheese type, you need to figure out if you want to serve your luscious crab dip hot or cold.

I love it hot, but for the next couple of months, it is dish best served cold.

This type of dip can get very stiff in the fridge, so you will need some dense bread, cracker or vegetables to stand up to it.

Just make sure your bread and/or crackers are on the white bread side of the kitchen. Too many conflicting seasonings make for very poor pairings. The only exception to that "rule" would be Herr's Maryland Crab flavored potato ships. They are a bit thin for dips, but if you aren't opposed to a mess and your dip has thinned a bit, give it a try.

Dave Bielecki, Author

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 Picture courtesy Boat US

CBMM's Book Launch Party: Tradition, Speed and Grace

On Thursday, May 31, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum hosted a private reception to celebrate the launching of CBMM's newly published book, *Tradition, Speed and Grace: Chesapeake Bay Sailing Log Canoes*, written by John C. North II, with images by Chesapeake artist Marc Castelli, among others. At the reception, CBMM Chief Curator Pete Leshar introduced North, who spoke about the challenges in the journey leading to his published work, while acknowledging his wife, Ethel, for her endless support and encouragement. The book is available at CBMM's Museum Store, with 100% of the book's proceeds benefiting the children and adults served by the non-profit museum. **For more information, go to cbmm.org.**

From left: Chesapeake artist Marc Castelli, John C. North II, and CBMM Chief Curator Pete Leshar.



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Previewing the Upper Bay Bass Fishery

By Tim Sherman

At the end of this month, some of the best professional bass fishermen on the planet will visit the Upper Chesapeake Bay. They will be fishing in the 4-day Bassmaster Elite Series tournament launching out of the Bush River from July 26 to 29. Our tidal fishery presents a challenge for most of the field, as few have vast experience with the ebb and flow of tides. This is a dog days of summer event, meaning the bite could be tough. Yet, these are the best bass fishermen and they can figure things out in a hurry.

The field can fish from the flowing Susquehanna all the way to the Bay Bridge. During the 2015 Elite series event here, several anglers risked fiberglass gel coat and propellers in the flowing Susquehanna. None, however, fished south of Middle River. In this wide expanse of the bay, the pros will fish similar cover and structure as they do on the lakes on tour: grass beds, sunken wood-laden banks and flats, rock piles, piers, and docks. They will have to face the rise and fall of tides and the current that floods and flushes the area they are fishing.

At the top end of the bay there are the Susquehanna and Northeast rivers. Each fish differently. The Northeast features all types of bass cover. Gerald Swindle finished fourth in 2015 by crashing crankbaits into shallow sunken logs in the river. Sixth place finisher Bernie Schultz fished in Northeast Creek working shoreline cover.

The mighty grass beds of the Susquehanna Flats had no bearing on the 2015 tournament. However, Greg Hackney finished in eighth place by fishing drop offs and sunken wood in the river south of Lapidum. Second place went to Bill Lowen who cast spinnerbaits to deadfalls along the banks of Swan Creek. Will the vegetation on the flats play a part this year? If the bass are there, the pros will be there, too. Floating frogs, buzzbaits will tempt bass on the surface. Flipping jigs and plastics through the mats gets results from the less active bass in the grass.

The Elk River sets up much like the Northeast. There are plenty of docks and grass beds. So, too, does the Bohemia River. A bit farther south, the Sassafras River features grass beds, wood, and docks. This is also one of the only places where you will find lily pads. Like the Sassafras, Stillpond and Churn Creeks have the grass, wood, and piers, yet the pros paid very little attention to these areas in 2015.

Two anglers had top 10 finishes in 2015 fishing in the Bush River. Russ Lane focused his efforts in Otter Creek with a jig for his seventh-place finish. Mark Menendez finished ninth by fishing wood, shoreline reeds, and wood cover in the river and in Bush Creek. The event is launching from Flying Point Park in the Bush this year. If the pros plan to stay local, the Bush will fish small.



They are not allowed to fish any waters near Aberdeen Proving Grounds. This means the upper end of the river is all they have. This area can get crowded in a hurry.

Only one pro in the 2015 top ten fished in the Gunpowder River complex. Like the Bush, much of this river was also out of bounds because of surrounding federal lands. Davey Hite finished fifth by working over the Joppatowne quarry with a variety of lures. The upper end of the tidal Gunpowder was devastated by a large fish kill in December 2016. The big question this year is, has the area recovered quickly enough to draw bass and the pros chasing them?

Pros paid little attention to the Gunpowder's three tidal creeks – Dundee, Saltpeter, and Seneca. In 2015, the Saltpeter and Dundee had very sparse grass beds and an equally sparse bass population. Grass in the Seneca was healthy and there are plenty of piers to pick apart; yet the pros didn't think the area worthy.

The farthest south that you will likely find the pro anglers is Middle River. The 2015 winner, Aaron Martens, fished the pier pilings of Bowleys Marina and landed most of his winning weight on chatter baits and spinnerbaits. Carl Jocumsen also fished in a Middle River marina and finished tenth. Along with countless docks, the river has healthy vegetation. However, Middle River also suffered a fish kill in late 2015. Since then, a restocking effort for bass was undertaken by Maryland DNR and Maryland BASS Nation. These stocked bass may be worth the gamble if they have grown to appreciable size for the weigh in bag.

You may have seen sponsor-wrapped bass boats buzzing around the upper bay scouting the area. The pros on board are looking for the best bass haunts to capitalize in the tournament. Come July 26, the pressure of finding and catching the heaviest limits for four days commences. Whichever pro figures out the fishery and the fish will be victorious.



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Another Successful Boating Safety Day!

Another year, another successful Boating Safety Day for the Baltimore County Police Marine Unit. The bad weather held off and festivities kicked off right on time. We had the help and support of the Baltimore County Police Department, Baltimore County Fire Department, Natural Resource Police, Marine Trades Association of Baltimore County, Baltimore Boating Center, Boat U.S. Foundation, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Upper Bay Boating, It's A Waterlife Radio and many more. Mission BBQ provided delicious meals for all volunteers while Paul's Pork & Prime had pit beef and hotdogs, and Kona Ice had much-needed shaved ice and ice cream on the hot and humid day! The continued support from our various vendors is much appreciated and we could not have this event without them!

As always, this is a family friendly event and we had plenty of prizes and games for the kids. "Splash" the Natural Resource Police safety mascot, gave out lots of hugs and safety tips. The Marine Unit provided shark corn

hole game and ring toss games to save a mannequin in the water, the Baltimore County Fire Department Medics taught CPR, and Scales & Tales brought a snake, owl and turtle along to show off! At noon the Baltimore County Police Marine Unit released a memorial wreath into the water for Fallen Officer Amy Caprio, which was followed by a flag burn -- a special tribute that explains what each and every stripe and section of our flag means and explains the hardships our troops have experienced.

This day was full of fun, games and prizes along with safe boating tips to get everyone ready to enjoy their summer on the water! We thank everyone for coming out and hope each and every person enjoyed themselves and was able to take away a few safer boating tips for the summer! Our goal is to offer the community with a family fun event while providing safety tips to keep everyone on the water safe. We are hoping for a fun safe summer for all!

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Ramp Rage

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

So, you bought a new center console at one of the boat shows last spring and have been chomping at the bit for that first chance to get out and fish. Memorial weekend is right around the bend. Schools out and the family can't wait to join in on the fun. You're so excited you can't sleep. The night before the big day your family sleeps while you're drinking coffee, making sandwiches and packing coolers for a magnificent weekend. The weather radio is predicting clear skies and light winds. A mental checklist is swirling through your head.

Even though the boat came with a Coast Guard safety package you called the local Coast Guard Auxiliary for a courtesy check. Everything is in order. Life jackets, safety flares, throw cushion with line and even a bucket to bail the boat if the bilge pump fails. The boat looks great! Feels Great! Life is good. You step outside and there she sits waiting patiently behind your vehicle. You hop in the truck and fire it up. You're still in your pajamas and slippers. You check the trailer lights. AOK. While the truck sits at idle you get on the boat and check the navigation lights, motor trim and fuel. Everything is perfect. Time to get dressed and wake up the wife and kids. Three AM.

Even that goes smooth. They are almost as excited as you are. You'll get an early start and beat the traffic. Hey, it's only a two-hour drive to the ramp with no traffic. One last visit to the bathroom for everyone and we're off. Even the traffic isn't bad for a long holiday weekend. The mental checklist is still swirling in your mind. Registration, fishing licenses, stickers, ramp permit, everything is in order. The kids are in the back seat fast asleep and the wife is busy reading some article in a magazine. This is going to be the BEST weekend ever!

For some reason though you just can't relax. That checklist just won't go away. Maybe it's the 4 cups of coffee you had or the sleep you didn't have. Half way to the ramp and your mind starts with the "what ifs". What if the ramps closed? Maybe I should have called the County. Nah. There's no way they would have the ramp closed for a holiday weekend. What if the fish aren't biting? What if the weather man was wrong. Oh well, nothing I can do about that. Your starting to get a headache. Hey, honey did you pack sunscreen for the kids and our sunglasses? Yup. How about beach towels? Yup. Phone chargers? Yup.

Just a mile from the ramp and the sun is starting to rise. Flags are almost limp as a slight breeze occasionally stirs them from their sleep. So far not a cloud in the sky. You wake the kids as the truck makes its final turn on to the road heading down to the ramp. And then you see it. Break lights. A long line of them. It looks like the scene from that Kevin Costner movie. "Build it and they will come." You're in for a long wait. And your wired for sound. As soon as the kids saw the red lights they went back to sleep. Even the wife has put down the magazine and is fast asleep. You can hear horns blowing about a quarter mile up the line. People are out of their vehicles either conversing with fellow boaters or readying their boats for launching. You can see some people are old pros. Others don't have a clue. At least YOUR ready. Even though this is your first time the wife already knows her role as dock line manager. Suddenly it hits you. Dock lines. You had them in the garage arranged in order by length.

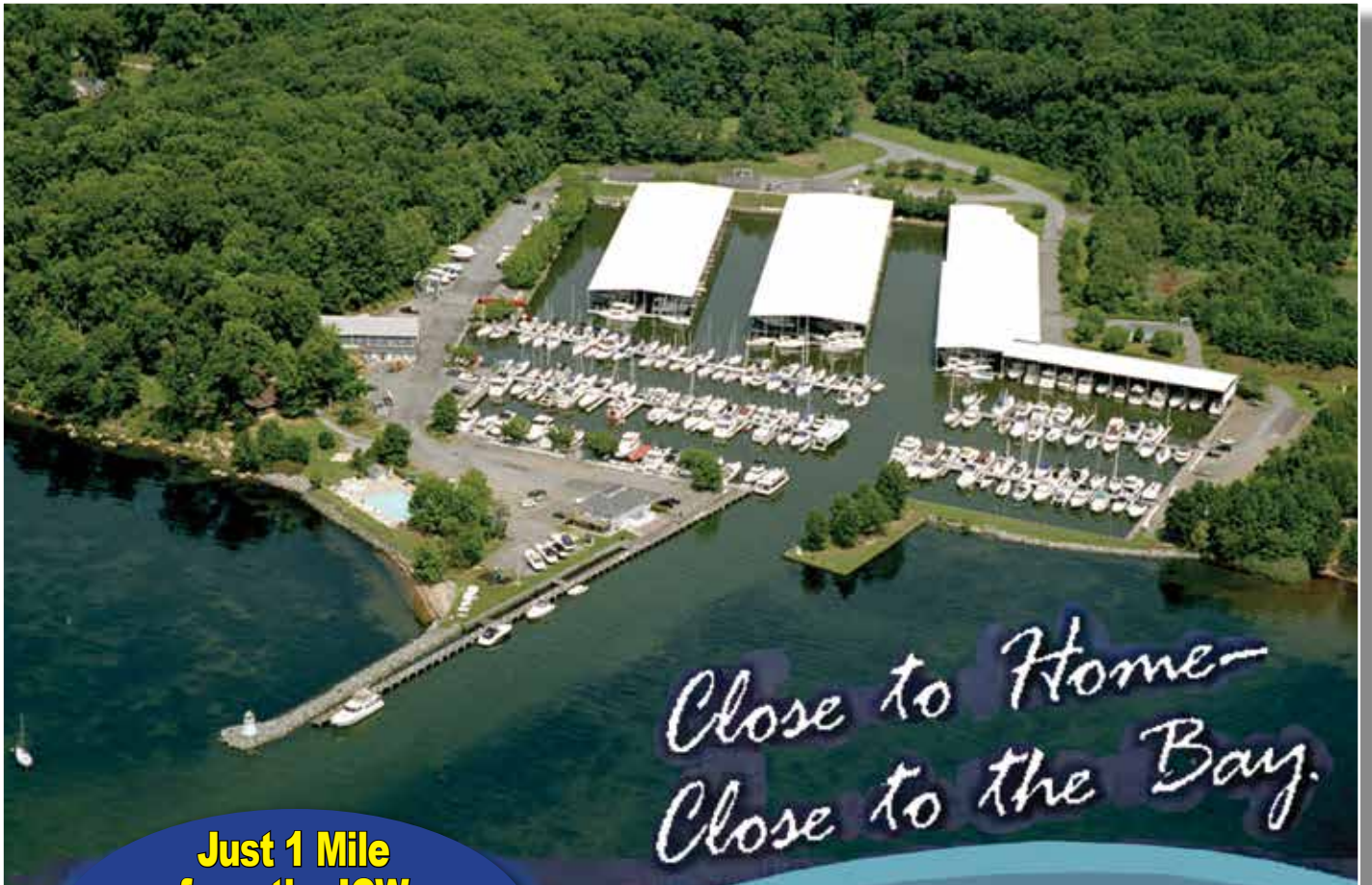


But did they ever get put back in the boat? #\$\$@% The line is moving slowly but at least it's moving. You wake up the wife and have her take the wheel while you ready the boat for launching. It's going to take a little longer now that you have to use your anchor line as a dock line. You transfer all your gear from the truck to the boat. Man, that's a lot of gear. During the transfer you snap the tip off your favorite rod. Ouch! You can feel the rage start to build but you need to push through it. For the wife and kids! An hour later and you can see the ramp. Just a few boats in front of you. One guy is jackknifed in the ramp. He's trying to launch a 12-foot aluminum boat attached to the back of a conversion van with all the windows blacked out. No way he can see what he's doing. The four guys in the big Ford duelly in front of you are starting to get irritated. After a few minutes they just can't take it anymore. When they hop out of the truck it looks like they all are pro linebackers. They walk down behind the van and lift the boat off the trailer and walk it down to the water, and tie it to the pier. A few words are exchanged and the line moves forward.

Now it's your turn. You've done this a hundred times in your mind. The anchor rope is ready to grab. The boats all lined up and ready to go. As you start backing down the wife has already got the anchor line attached to the bow and is holding on walking down the finger pier as you back up. Your stern straps are off and you hop out to disconnect the bow safety chain. Just a bump more and your new baby will be floating. As you tap the brakes and watch her float you can't help but be proud. The wife and kids are already on the finger pier and all you have to do is park the truck. Then it's off to paradise.

After about ten minutes you get the truck parked and hurry back to the finger pier. Somethings not right. The bilge pump is frantically pumping water as the boat is filling up. Oh my God! The PLUG! You can see it laying against the transom slowly disappearing under water. The wife is still holding the anchor rope while the kids are sitting on the finger pier, feet in the water hands on their heads. The horns are starting to blow again. A DNR Officer helps you drag your baby up the ramp so it doesn't sink any further.

Hey, there is a happy ending to the story. After you regain your composure you remember you packed a wrench in the truck to tighten down the drain plug. It's still sitting where you put it. A simple fix. Between the bilge pump and you with the bucket she's drained and ready in thirty minutes. While your bailing the nice officer, feeling sorry for you, is giving you the local fishing report. Since you weren't really one of the early birds and were at the end of the line you didn't really hurt anything other than your pride. The high levels of caffeine and adrenaline that could have put you in ramp rage had already subsided. All is good in the world again.



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YUK! This Washroom is Disgusting

By Doug Dawson

You never know what to expect when you pull into a marina and need to use the washroom. Some are really questionable and disgusting while others are fantastic—clean and modern.

Sometimes, you'd rather not shower because the washrooms are so disgusting.

Many washrooms don't have enough hooks to hang up your clothes and towel. There isn't always a stool to place your overnight kit with your soap, shampoo etc. I've even gotten into the shower to find the shower head doesn't work or there's no water pressure. The floor is often wet and sometimes dirty before you start. After the shower, you have to balance on one foot while maneuvering the other foot into your shoe without touching the floor, then do it all over for the other foot.

What can you do?

To customize your shower stall, take one or two of those over-the-door hooks and hang them on the stall door or wall for extra hanging space. You can also take one or two interlocking plastic or rubber squares or grates to put on the floor for your feet. When you are finished, rinse them off in the shower and carry them back to the boat. Soap-on-a-rope is easier to hang where there is no soap dish and I find it easier to wear slip-on shoes when going to the showers so that it's easier to take them off and put them back on when I'm wet.

If there's a series of multiple stalls, check them all out before you claim one. Check for hooks, cleanliness, a place to sit, water pressure and check that the door locks properly so it doesn't keep swinging open. In other words, try it before you strip.

Not all washrooms are questionable. We have come across some great washrooms—ones with clean operational showers and hot water, an adjoining changing stall with plenty of hooks, a bench to sit on and the floor in the changing area covered with a wooden or plastic grate so your feet don't have to touch the wet floor. They also have toilets in the same section of the building so you don't have to go outside to another door to use the toilet in the cold, in front of an audience.

The washroom at our marina this year, has a fantastic washroom—cleaned every day, tiled floors and walls, glass doors. Toilet stalls are tiled with glass doors—one accessible stall. Large vanity with



4 sinks and mirror the length of the room.

They have a separate adjoining shower room with 4 huge rectangular showers, again tiled floors and walls. Hot water, showers at the right height with a good spray of water. A moveable bench sits in each shower stall and there are 4 hooks on the wall for hanging "stuff". The advantage to a rectangular shower is that you can hang your "stuff" at one, shower at the other end, then dress at the dry end before leaving the shower stall. In the room are 4 sinks with one long counter and huge mirror the length of the room. The whole boaters lounge—sitting room, washrooms, showers, laundry room with four pair of washers and dryers with laundry cart, counter, iron and ironing board, is air conditioned.

This is the kind of washroom all boaters love.



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It seems that when we find a really bad washroom at a marine facility, we spread the word at get togethers letting other boaters know so that they won't go there. But, we don't always spread the word about an outstanding washroom facility.

When you find a fantastic washroom at a marine facility on your cruise, enjoy it and remember where to come back to next time. Be sure to compliment the marina operator.

Don't keep it a secret either. Spread the word so we can all benefit.

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How NOT to Float Your Boat

By Montana Grant

After a lifetime of boating the world's waterways, some things stay the same. A boat that does not float or work properly will guarantee the same outcome. Keeping your boat sound and safe will allow you to drift successfully through your nautical life.

Every time we get on someone else's boat, the same problems arise. It starts with a leak, an engine issue, or something broken. Solutions vary from "I have no clue!", to jiggle, hammer, duct tape and spray some WD-40 on it. Just because a boat is clean and pretty on the outside does not mean it is mechanically seaworthy.

No one wants to get a tow. This is like a dog having to wear the "Cone of Shame" after a vet visit. Most boaters are anxious to show off their craft and are embarrassed when something goes wrong.

Many of your boat challenges are preventable with routine maintenance, education, and care. Become a student of your boat and understand the crafts systems and components. Find a mentor or have a marine tech go over your boat with you. It will be well worth the time and investment.

Most boat problems are basic and simple. If water is coming into your boat, there is a hole, or you forgot to put the drain plug in. If the motor won't start, check to see if you have gas. If the starter does nothing, check the battery. It usually comes down to fuel, spark, and switches. For paddle or oar powered boats, always carry a spare.

Here are some thoughts and solutions to better your boating experience.

IT WILL NOT START!

Begin by checking the kill switch. Simple and common sense but often the source of the problem. Battery and the wiring connections to the terminal or ignition switch are the next check. You may discover corrosion, loose wires, or a disconnect. Clean and tighten the screws or connections. If the starter groans or barely tries to engage, the battery may be dead. A jump or recharge could be the solution. Make sure you understand why something failed. Is the alternator recharging your battery? Is the battery old and failing? Did critters chew on your wiring? Are the plastic connectors old and brittle?

Inspect and clean all your wiring routinely. Having a secondary battery is also a good idea. When you have your boat serviced, get the tech to give you a 101 training about the systems. The Captain needs to understand every aspect of their craft!

THE MOTOR JUST DIED!

Someone bumped the kill switch. You just ran out of fuel. An electrical issue has occurred such as a blown fuse. Start by resetting the kill switch. Now look at the fuel gauge. Old fuel with condensation in it could be an issue. Fresh full gas tanks are important. There can also be an inline fuse that may have failed. These plastic, spring loaded connections often come apart with age or become corroded. Know the location and paths of your wiring systems.

If you discover you have an ignition chip or technical issue, call for help.

LOSING POWER!!!

Next explore the fuel filters and spark plugs. If the plugs are dirty or full of oil, they need to be cleaned or replaced. Carry spare fuel filters and spark plugs to replace as needed. Old gas, over 3 months, will need to be replaced or require a stabilizer additive.

THE MOTOR WILL NOT SHIFT!

The transmission is not engaging. If you have an E-Link electronic control, it may be a fuse. Carry spares. 90% of small boats use a mechanical cable to shift. It is probably a linkage issue. Check

connections and cable integrity. Start at the gear box and work back to the motor. Look for loose or broken cables. Remember that you can also shift the engine manually. Inboard motors also have fluid or gear oil that may be low and needs attention.

THE MOTOR IS OVERHEATED!

There is an obstruction in the water intake. Trash, weeds, plastic bags, or debris is causing a blockage. Jellyfish can also get sucked into the port. Inspect, clean, and clear. Having a wire or snake may be needed to clear the lines. You may also observe leaking or spraying hoses. The clamps have failed, are loose, or the hose is rotten or compromised. If it is just at the end of the hoses, a quick trim and reconnect is often the solution, if the hose is long enough.

Also look for broken belts. Carry spares and replace as needed. Belts operate alternators and pumps. These impact fuel, charge, and cooling.

THE BOAT IS FILLING WITH WATER!

You may notice that the boat feels heavy or the bilge pump is working overtime. Check the transom drain plug. You may have left it off, it can fail, or it fell out. Carry a spare and replace. Look into the engine compartment for spraying water from a hose malfunction. Live well intakes can also be cracked or leaking. Shut the motor down and work the problem.

Abandoning ship is the last option. Always have the proper safety gear needed and required by law. The best way to deal with boat problems is prevention. Routine inspections, and maintenance will avoid almost all issues. Carrying needed tools, spare parts, and instructions could make your boating adventure solvable on the spot. If you are the Captain that parks their boat in the yard, or slip, for extended times and expect it to perform at its best, dream on.

Boating is supposed to be fun and non-stressful. Do your part to prevent these things from ruining your day, by doing your homework and preparation.

Keep your boat and life afloat!

Montana Grant

For more Montana Grant, visit his blog or catch him on Facebook 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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Treble Hooks Not Worth the Trouble

The trouble with treble hooks is that they are bound to stick you one day. I've always been extra careful with all hooks, and but for a few

close calls, thought I would never get stuck past the barb. But after fishing over five decades, it happened. Here's how: Two friends, Tim and Tom were fishing with me on my Parker 21SE. Tim stowed his rod vertically in the center-console rod holder with the other rods. He still had his big Chug Bug top-water lure tied on from fishing the night before. It was hooked to the lure-keeper on his rod just above the reel.

On our way out of the river, I stopped to tighten the reel because the lure was coming loose. Then somebody yelled, "Birds!" Startled, I looked up and caught my left, middle finger on a treble hook. Ouch! The point of the hook was sticking out of the tip of my finger with the barb firmly imbedded. I couldn't believe my eyes, but knew what I had to do. Long story short, after I took the hook off the lure I got my needle-nose pliers, and pressing through skin, mashed the barb down. It took sheer resolve and maybe 15 minutes of gritting my teeth, but I forced the fat hook through. Then I got my dykes and had Tom snip the hook. Surprisingly, the wound didn't bleed that much. We cleaned and bandaged it, and wrapped it with tape. Good thing I was prepared with hook removal tools and a first aid kit. Otherwise, our fishing trip would have been over before it started.

I share my treble hook tribulations so others might learn from them. It was only a year prior when my buddy Chris got stuck in the finger with a treble hook while fishing on my boat. At least it was one of those thin wire jerk-bait hooks and not one of those thick galvanized hooks like the one that got me.

After quickly reviewing the directions in my hook removal kit, I used the old technique of pressing the hook eye down and yanking it with a sturdy string. The method worked perfectly. That was the first time I ever removed a hook from anybody. It was easy. Chris smiled and we shared a sigh of relief. Once I



cleaned and wrapped his finger, we went merrily on with our fishing trip. The only other time someone got a hook in them on my boat was the

summer of 1988. My fishing buddy caught the back of his arm with a crank-bait treble hook casting to breaking stripers. Unfortunately, I wasn't prepared to remove the hook that day. Our fishing trip was over because I had to take my friend to the hospital to have a doctor cut the hook out and stitch up his arm. If I'd had the proper tools on the boat it would have been possible to push the hook through and snip it off.

Sometimes I still use crank-baits with treble hooks, but mostly not. Treble hooks can be replaced with single J hooks on most lures without losing much, if any, action.

Folks fishing with kids using treble hooks or even single hooks are advised to mash the barbs down. Not only is it much safer, it helps young anglers improve their catching skills. If a child gets stuck and the barb is mashed down the injury can usually be dealt with on the boat. After a little first-aid, a pat on the back, and a cold drink, the trip can continue. For increased safety and simplicity, the barbs can be mashed down on circle hooks too.

Another way to avoid or lessen hook injuries is to always wear a cap and sunglasses when fishing. In addition to helping keep the sun out of one's eyes and improving sight below the water, these imperative items help deflect hooks off one's head and out of one's face.

Finally, treble hooks often harm fish too. Removing a treble or a J hook from a gut-hooked, under-sized fish usually means that fish will not survive.

To help conserve the striped bass fishery, Maryland and other states have enacted new hook regulations. Non-offset circle hooks are now required for some bait-fishing situations. To learn more about the new circle hook rules see the MD-DNR website at: dnr.maryland.gov/Fisheries/Pages/recreational/circle_hooks.aspx.

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Back River Restoration Committee



There are jobs you take to make a living, and then there are jobs you embrace because it allows you to make the world a little bit better for everyone. My work for Back River Restoration committee is the latter.

While some may find the concept of spending an entire summer cleaning up trash in the heat miserable, I found my time at Back River Restoration to be thoroughly enjoyable and fulfilling.

Watching dumpster after dumpster be hauled away, filled with trash engenders a feeling that's hard to quantify. In a way it's a fight for the survival of beautiful natural resource, but it's also a way to see how our individual actions can tackle the most daunting problems.

Having spent two consecutive summers witnessing firsthand the condition of Back River and its watershed I can reasonably assert that we are facing a major ecological crisis. Shorelines almost completely covered in trash, outfalls so encumbered with litter that the water ceases to flow, entire ecosystems transformed by disposable cups - and these are just a few of the horrors I've witnessed on the Back River. Entire environments are being devastated by our affinity for disposing trash wherever we please and if this pattern continues there's no telling how much damage we may cause.

Being exposed to an ongoing assault on this critical watershed, I felt myself imbued with a determination to rectify the destruction I witnessed. I felt this dedication and determination to a cause because I believed I could make a difference. When a shoreline was cleaned, or an outfall cleared - I felt an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. It's a job which provides something few occupations offer - a sense of purpose. Combating the rampant infestation of trash onto our shores has proven to be one of my most worthwhile personal undertakings.

Even though sometimes the amount of work necessary to make a difference can seem overwhelming, I've witnessed enough positive changes that I believe this is worth doing. It's not a summer job, it's calling in a sense. A way for a young person to contribute to furthering a cause that you see firsthand - and believe in.



Protecting the future of Back River and the Chesapeake Bay

Back River Restoration Committee is a non-profit watershed organization concentrating on cleaning up Back River and the Chesapeake Bay. For the last few years BRRC has been able to take on 2 to 6 summer environmental interns to clean up trash from Back River and its surrounding watershed. The interns clean up the river, plant trees, mark storm drains, learn to run a boat, about tides, wildlife and more. In the last two summers alone, the interns have prevented over 175,000 pounds of trash and hundreds of tires from flowing into the Chesapeake Bay.



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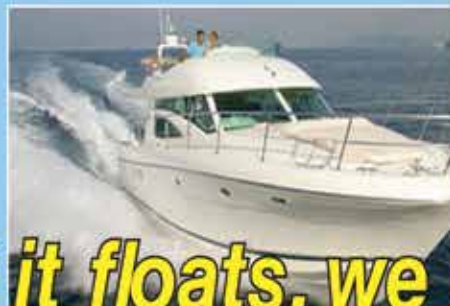


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Perfect Harmony

By L. Alan Keene

Boating has provided Peg and me with the opportunity to meet many interesting and accomplished people over the past 35 years, but none more interesting or accomplished than the young man we met on a warm afternoon a few years back.

It was the Saturday before Easter, I think, and Peg and I had just snugged up our lines. Our morning sail had been great, but since NOAA radio had mentioned the potential for violent thunderstorms and penny sized hail in the afternoon, we decided that the darkening skies were reason enough to enjoy the rest of the day in the marina.

As we sat back in the cockpit, enjoying the unseasonably warm Spring day, a young man approached from down the pier. After the usual pleasantries, he expressed admiration for our sailboat, comparing our "thoroughbred" to his "slug", a 25-footer that he kept in a slip close by. After checking out another sailboat in a nearby slip, he returned and we began sharing sailing tales. While he spoke with all the usual vernacular, there was the hint of an accent that piqued my wife's curiosity.

"May I ask where you're from originally?", Peg asked politely. "I detect a slight accent that I can't quite place."

"Well, I'm from all over, really," he said with a chuckle.

"I was born in Romania and moved to New Zealand when I was a boy. That's where I took up sailing."

"Wow, what a place to learn to sail!", I responded. "In the nation that STOLE our cup!"

After a good laugh, we told him of a recent trip we had taken to Australia and how we regretted not visiting New Zealand while we were there. For the next half hour or so we shared our love for the Aussies and he, his love for his adopted homeland. We learned all about New Zealand's climate and topography, and the Kiwi's obsession with the sea. Curious to know what this very likable young man did for a living, I offered that I was retired after 35 years in mental health work. "What kind of business are you in?", I asked.

"I'm a musician," he responded, failing to go any further.

"And what instrument would that be?", I queried, unable to control my curiosity.

"The piano," he responded, "I play and teach the piano."

"You play, too. Are you a concert pianist?", I asked, by now fully aware that I was prying.

"Yes, I play about 45 concerts a year and teach at a university in Pennsylvania.

"May I ask your last name?", I continued, suspecting that we might be in the presence of a local celebrity.

"I'd prefer not, if you don't mind. It's Romanian and a little cumbersome. I hope you understand?"

Assuring him that I did, I led the discussion back to sailing and our mutual love of the sport. Before long though, I found myself asking about the dangers that sailing could present for the hands of a pianist. He concurred that some hazards certainly existed, but that sailing was as much a passion as his music and he chose to enjoy both. After a brief discussion of our shared liberal politics, our new friend excused himself and, with a wave, was gone.

"What a nice guy," Peg said, amazed that almost an hour had passed since he took a seat on our finger pier. "I wonder who he is?"

"Well, it's clear that he wants to keep a low profile, so he's probably well known in the area," I answered. "Maybe he plays with the Baltimore Philharmonic or the orchestra down in DC.... when he's not teaching. I'd love to hear him play sometime.... but first we have to figure out who he is. I'll check him out on the internet when we get home."

With that, the discussion turned to dinner.

Since we knew our young friend's first name and the university where he taught, it was just a matter of checking the music faculty for an instructor with the same first name.

As I perused the university's home page, clicking on the music department, what I discovered literally took my breath

away. There next to a picture of the young man who shared a Saturday afternoon with us was the biography of an internationally acclaimed concert pianist! There next to his photo was the bio of a performer whose work has been universally praised around the world....an international award-winning artist who has performed at the White House, the Winter Olympics, and Carnegie Hall!

As I caught my breath and Peg was losing hers, I was struck by two things. First was the modesty and affability of our new friend. While you would expect a person of his stature to be aloof and self-consumed, he was clearly the opposite; again, and again redirecting the conversation away from himself. And second.... his love of sailing. It was evident from the moment we met that he was passionate about sailing. But even more.... he was passionate about sailing the upper Chesapeake. It occurs to me now that if his skill with the tiller ever approaches his skill with the black and white keys, anyone with a fragile ego better stay clear of the "slug"!



On the Waterfront

with George Waters

photo by Donna Bedell

“You’re welcome” or “No problem”

“You’re welcome” or “No problem”—Which is the right response to “Thank you”?

It finally happened. One of those signs of age which let you know, definitively, that you are losing it. When someone thanked me recently, instead of saying “you’re welcome,” as I have for 50 years, I slipped and said, “no problem.” Like I was Millennial. Soon, no doubt, I will accidentally utter that other conversational abomination of the age, “No worries,” as if I have gone straight-up marsupial.

That’s when you can just push me off a cliff. I only ask one favor—right before I go over the edge, let me clasp to my chest one of those people who responds to “thank you” with “thank you.” We’ll go together, and deserve it.

Which reminds me of a joke. How many curmudgeons does it take to screw in a light bulb? Two. One to screw it in, and one to complain to him that light isn’t as bright as it was when he was a kid, back when light knew some respect.

One of these days we are going to find that the word “please” has been replaced with “wouldja already?” These days we are sloughing off social

norms faster than a lobbyist sheds moral objections.

And while I am on the subject of norms, may I propose we find a replacement for the celebratory word “woo”? Yes, it meets the requirements for joyful exclamations—one syllable, heavy with vowels—but it has outlived its prime. At concerts and ball games, half-hearted “woos” outnumber full-throated ones 10 to 1. And let’s face it, “woohoo” has come to sound downright ironic.

How about “baa!” Somebody hits a home run, “baa!” Great guitar solo, “baa!” It brings to mind sheep, yes, but what’s more appropriate for the political-bubble times we live in? “Baa” is a comfortable cry everybody learned in childhood, and thus easy to remember. Plus, like “woo,” it has the benefit of not meaning anything, but in a fresh way.

Imagine the annual State of the Union address by the president, interrupted repeatedly by Congresspeople standing to clap and shout “baa!” That I would watch.



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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

Waterman's Day July 1, at 12:00 Noon. Location: The Bulkhead on Bayside Avenue Rock Hall Waterman's Association 410-639-7719

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

Salute To Veterans Fireworks July 3, 5-10 pm North East Community Park End of Walnut Street North East, MD 21901

Rock Hall Fireworks July 3, at 9pm. Over Harbor in Rock Hall 410-639-7719

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

Elk River Exploration July 21 9-11 am at Elk Neck State Park - Rogues Harbor Boat Ramp Turkey Point Road North East, Maryland 21901

Cecil County Food & Wine Festival July 21 from 11-6 North East Community Park 200 Walnut St North East, Maryland 21901

Free Concert on Vienna's Waterfront on the Nanticoke July 21 from 4-7 pm- parking, boat ramp and overnight dockage are all free. 443-239-0813 ArtsVienna@gmail.com

Huk Bassmaster Elite at Upper Chesapeake Bay July 26-29 Take off at 6 am Flying Point Park in Edgewood, Md. Weigh ins at Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen, Md. each day around 3pm See Tacklebox Tim Sherman's column for additional info.



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Ship's Log *by James Bedell*

With the advent of the smartphone, many of the traditional boating essentials have gone by the wayside. In recent years more and more boaters are relying on smartphones and tablets for navigation, communication, and even systems management. I still believe every boat needs a paper chart, a VHF, and an accurate ship's log.

Imagine this: an encyclopedia dedicated to your boat; a chart of your fuel consumption at different RPM's and varying currents. This could all be yours, and it's really not as hard as you might think. Working in a marine store, I've helped hundreds of captains find the parts and accessories that they need to keep their boats in tip top shape. It is always helpful, for captains and store staff alike, if you have part numbers ready when you go hunting for filters, oil, and fuel additives. If you know what you're looking for, it's a lot easier to find. Don't waste time every year trying to figure out what filters you need; write it down the first time and you'll always be sure of your needs. A ship's log is a great tool for keeping a record of all of your services parts, dates of service, and vital trip information. Keep a record of how much fuel you burn each time you go out and you'll be able to estimate your fuel needs in any conditions. Now, I know most of you are not about to put pen to paper and keep a traditional log, and that's ok. A smartphone can be a great tool for this and can make keeping a log quick and easy. Find a good marine forecast before you go out (always a good idea anyway!) and take a screenshot with your phone then attach it to a note in notepad, or use a ship's log app, and leave comments about fuel consumption, distance traveled, comfort, and any other notes to help you preserve important information about the trip. I like to note the wave height along with wind direction when starting out, then some notes on comfort and rolling. Over time this will give you a good idea of what size and direction waves make for an uncomfortable ride. When those conditions pop up, you'll know to stay at the dock or find a protected basin. It doesn't take much to write, type, or even dictate some impressions of the trip, then you add those notes to your forecast screenshot and you've got the beginnings of a ship's log. Keep a separate note on your tablet with part numbers for your common maintenance parts, any necessary capacities like engine oil, tank capacity, etc.

Pretty soon you'll have your very own encyclopedia dedicated to your boat. Plus, when you do this on a phone or tablet, you can use the search or "find" function to locate keywords to easily find log entries from days with similar conditions, giving you a snapshot of what to expect from your boat before you ever leave the dock.

I'm all for using new technology for boating; new GPS and depth units are far superior to older models and new VHF's with built in distress functions can save lives. But just because we use the newest technologies doesn't mean we have to disregard the old standards of boating. We can use our new technology to update the old standards. Of course, it is still important to be able to read a chart, speak on a VHF, and spot a sandbar underwater. But with nearly universal connectivity, forward looking sonar, up to the minute GPS readings, and engine gauges on your phone, even the oldest salts can't deny any longer that mobile devices are the newest and potentially most useful tools for managing and monitoring your boat.

Don't let yourself become complacent though; take a break from the Angry Birds and take a few minutes at anchor to start your ship's log. Pretty soon you'll be the captain that walks into the marina store with a list of part numbers you need, knowing exactly how much oil to buy. You'll be the captain that knows how much fuel you'll need for the trip, the one who will know when to pull anchor and head for the dock. With just a bit of observation and note taking you can create your own don't-leave-the-dock-without-it boating accessory; a well-kept ship's log. If you need help getting started you can find a variety of different styles of ship's logs online, purchase a pre-printed, ready to fill in log, or simply start writing down as much as you can about each trip including wind speed and direction, tide changes and current speeds, your RPM's, fuel consumption, speed, time, direction and distance traveled. As you fill your log you will begin to see it take shape as a useful reference tool. The more you reference it, the more you will understand about your boat and the effects of different conditions on your outings. This will in turn make it easier to determine what information is important so that you can tailor your log to suite your needs. Don't get overwhelmed with the task, just keep some notes on each outing and use that information to inform you about your next. The best boater, the most competent boaters, are generally the most informed boaters, and that's no coincidence.



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Crossing the Manokin and Annemessex Rivers

It was late-September. Our last Voyager trip ended at Wenona Harbor on Deal Island in mid-July. Since then, I had cancelled two outings; one in mid-August, and another in early September. I was beginning to worry that we would not be able to complete our Chesapeake Bay paddle before year's end. Each weekend brought with it a threat of thunderstorms and high winds. This did not bode well with the several long, open water crossings we would have to do on the next outing. Then, towards the end of September, a weather window opened. It looked like we might have an opportunity to get in one last paddle. I e-mailed my friends. Many had previous plans or would be on vacation. But the common theme of the replies was "Go ahead, we can make this leg up later." So, three of us set a meet-up time and began packing. This window would close soon and we might not get a second chance.

When I arrived at Ann's Cove, I found Chip's truck parked underneath a row of hedge apple trees. He had just finished eating breakfast and was packing up his gear. He had spent the previous evening camped out in the bed of his Toyota. I noticed that he had done this on several previous occasions as well. It's a practice he's developed over the many years of having driven around the country camping and paddling, paddling and camping. I thought to myself, "Maybe, after I retire, I'll adopt the practice. It would be a nice, slow, easy-paced way of seeing the country. One camp site to another; a day at a time." But before I completed that thought, Bob arrived and we began repackaging our kayaks and gear in Chip's truck, preparing for the drive back to Wenona and the morning's launch.

The drive from Ann's Cove takes about 2 hours and is mostly on country roads. Along the way we talked about how much gear

we should take with us on this trip. The original plan was to camp at Jane's Island State Park. But given that there would only be the 3 of us paddling this segment, we might be better off leaving the gear and renting a cabin for the night. Bob called the Ranger station and was told we were too late to reserve a cabin. However, upon our arrival we could rent a cabin as "walk-ins." It had something to do with a 24-hour advance reservation policy. Anyway, after Bob hung up, I commented that I didn't recall any cabins near the water at Janes. Certainly, none that we could land and launch from. In my recollection, they are located along the canal and separated from the water by a steep wall. "We will be better off packing our gear and camping down on Long Point," I said. "I camped there a few years back. It's a primitive site, and for that reason there's little likelihood it will be occupied. Let's take our gear, just in case." It was decided. We would stop at the Ranger Station, check out the cabins, and if a long carry was involved we would continue to Long Point.

We arrived at Wenona mid-morning. Winds were slight and air-temps hovered in the low 70s. While unloading and packing up the kayaks, a local resident came over to us and asked where we were headed. I replied, "We're crossing the Manokin, then headed down to Janes." I pronounced Manokin, "Man-o-kin." The man then proceeded to school us in the proper pronunciation of the two rivers we would be crossing that day. It's "Ma-NO-kin," he said, with heavy emphasis on the "NO." He was very nice about the corrections; just being friendly to a few visiting non-residents. We talked for a while, during which it was mentioned that he was 71 years old. This surprised all of us. "You don't look a day over 50," Chip said. Later, we would meet another "young man" who was also in his mid-70s, leaving us to wonder if there wasn't something about living on the lower eastern shore that was healthy and prevented aging.

We had time to practice our pronunciation as we paddled across the 5-mile stretch of open water that separates Wenona

from Hazard Point; our target on the distant shore. It's rare to find a crossing in the upper Chesapeake where you cannot visually recognize your destination on the opposite shore. We were finding this to be common place in the lower Chesapeake. We would launch on a compass heading and paddle toward our imagined destination until some feature would come into view on the horizon. Often times the feature first realized would turn out to be misleading. We learned that, frequently, if we looked away from the horizon for a brief period, then back, the horizon would appear completely different from our recollection. The lesson to be learned here is "Put your faith in your compass, not in your senses. Your eyes can and will deceive you." I carried a GPS for this reason. It was loaded with our planned route and waypoints. Sometimes you just have to have a backup plan.

From Hazard Point, we paddled west towards the sandy shores of Pat Island. This little paradise is situated between the Manokin and Annemessex rivers. It is bounded on its western side by the Chesapeake Bay. All three shorelines are beautiful, white sand beaches. In late summer the island is abloom with Seaside Goldenrod. Of course, at the time we did not know what those beautiful yellow wildflowers were. Later we learned they are a sort of feeding-station for butterflies of all types as they migrate their way southward. Our ignorance again solicited the comment, "Next trip Dave, you really need to recruit a botanist, or biologist, or someone who knows wildlife." Actually, I had tried. We began the series with a Ranger from the NPS, but he had dropped out early.

The paddle after lunch began with the calling out of a new compass heading. We were off on another 2-mile open water crossing.

The entrance into Daugherty Creek Canal is partially obscured by a long spit of sand. In mid-summer boaters drop anchor offshore and wade in to the beach for a day of sunbathing. On this late September day, however, the beaches were bare, except for a few gulls. We landed at the Janes Island dock about 3 PM. Almost immediately, Chip was admonished by a Ranger for landing at the floating dock. Turns out there was a sign that could only be seen from dockside. It read "Dock Closed." When Chip explained this to the Ranger, he was allowed to unload. Meanwhile, Bob and I were breaking another rule; we landed our kayaks on the boat ramp. We had missed a sign stating that kayaks are not allowed to use the boat ramp without first paying a launch fee. Once noticed, we rationalized. Technically speaking we were not launching; we were landing. No one said anything to us, probably because there were no boats ready for launch. We hauled the kayaks out of the water and rested. The paddle was half over.



Bob and I walked down the path along the rock wall while Chip stood guard over the kayaks. It's a good thing that we were unable to make a cabin reservation, because it would have been a very, very long gear carry. We decided that for one night, we could camp near the boat ramp. The kayaks were pulled ashore, unloaded, and tents pitched. There was still daylight remaining, so it stood to reason we could still explore some of Janes Island's water trails before darkness settled in.

Six paddle trails weave their ways through the marshland that forms Janes Island proper. Each is color coded and well-marked by large aluminum signs covered with a reflective film that is easily seen at night when scanned by flashlight. These are thirty miles of some of the best marsh paddling on the east coast. If you are interested in paddling here, you may want to download the waypoints for these trails by logging onto DNR's website for Janes Island. As we have paddled this area before, we followed the Green Trail, which bisects the island, out to the Bay. Looking out over the broad, empty, expanse of water there, Chip commented on the vastness of the Bay. "Wow, that is one big-a\$\$ed Bay." We would hear that refrain repeated many, many times in paddles to come.

We took the Red Trail back to camp, occasionally stopping to admire the slowly setting sun and the warm glow it cast over the marsh grass. That night we re-hydrated dinner and chatted about the days paddle. Everyone agreed that Pat's Island, with its white sand beaches, stands of golden rod wildflowers, and butterflies, was the highlight of the trip. As always, wine flowed freely and with it came a comfortable night's sleep. Everyone knew that tomorrow we faced our biggest challenge yet; crossing the Pocomoke Sound and it's 9-1/2 mile stretch of open-water.

Safety Tips for the Fun Kind of Towing

By Captain Dale Plummer

I'm on the water towing boats all summer from the Bush River down through Deale. I can tell you boating stories that would make you laugh, cry and cringe in fear. This time of the year the boating frenzy hits the "July High" and I see more and more common-sense boating rules being ignored. Just last week, I watched a young boater tubing with friends break every rule in the book which prompted this safety reminder.

The most important thing to remember when towing anyone behind a boat, whether on skis, a wakeboard, or on a tube, is to be sure that ALL riders are wearing a life jacket that is approved for the sport. Captains also need to keep the boat and the towable a safe distance from boats, docks, channel markers, bulkheads, shorelines — and from shallow water on BOTH sides of the boat. The law says 100 feet. While ropes made for towing tubers are sometimes shorter, full-length ski rope measures 75 feet long — add another few feet to account for the tow bridle, plus the length of the tube itself, and it's best to consider 100 feet as a bare minimum safe distance. To increase the safety of your tubers, avoid towing in congested areas, busy channels and pay attention to other boats in the area. Their operators may not be watching you or paying attention to the erratic movements you're making while trying to give your tuber a thrilling ride.

Maryland law requires an adult spotter in the boat whenever you are towing. They are responsible for keeping an eye on the rider which allows you to focus on driving and to keep an eye on your speed. If you've ever experienced the exhilaration of being whipped through a tight turn at the end of a ski rope, you know that the tube is traveling faster than the boat. The key to this is the length of the ski rope, which puts the tube through a much longer arc than the boat travels. In a full turn the tube may travel twice the distance of the boat, which means it's travelling twice as fast as well. So, while you, the Captain, may be experiencing that turn at 20 mph, your rider feels the water rushing by at 40 mph or more

— making it doubly important to avoid those aforementioned solid objects.

When traveling to and from your tubing area, secure inflatables within the boat. There was a tragic death a couple of years ago where a young man drowned after the tube unexpectedly flew from the boat and knocked both him and his girlfriend from the small Carolina Skiff. With no Captain aboard, the boat circled and struck the young man. By simply tying down the tube, this tragic scenario could have been avoided.

If you break down while out having fun with your family, have the spotter reel in the rider while you take the time to securely anchor your boat. Once everyone is on board and the boat is safely anchored, hail us on VHF channel 16 or use the BoatUS Towing App to contact us and we will be right out to assist. Our goal here at TowBoatUS is, and always will be, to make sure you and your family make it safely home.

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Shenanigans –

Good or bad, they're obviously up to something.

Reel Nauti – The ultimate play on words in the marine dictionary.

Flounder Pounder – Let's see the proof, buddy!

Kale Yeah – Clearly owned by a proud health nut.

Shaken Not Stirred – They know what we like!

Ship Happens – We can all relate to this one, can't we?

Bite Me – Ferocious on land – on the water, too?

Mojo Risin' – Stepping onto that boat instantly increases any boater's mojo.

Jolly Toots – Not quite sure what this means, but it's fun to say!

Penny Pincher – Someone may have named his or her boat too quickly after buying it. credit boat us

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Live Aboard

by
Don and Gail
Elwell

Magellan Speaks!

Magellan here, first Ship's Cat of the Tesla's Revenge. I thought, since the Captain and First Mate were off ashore doing human things that I would address the sad lack of articles in this column about .well. . . .me!

I came to life aboard as a mature cat, a "rescue" in human parlance. I had been living with a family that dumped me when they bought a couple of obnoxious Corgis and was fortunate enough to have run into my new people at the shelter. Their former Ship's Cat, Kallisti, had just passed on and they were in dire need of a new companion. I made it clear to them that I was a people person, the perfect personal assistant for two artists living on a boat.

Fortunately, they bought it.

I had never lived on a vessel before, but was surprised that they seemed tailor made for cats. Boats have lots of little spaces to explore and into which one might tuck ones self. During the days I can sit in the sun and watch all manner of birds and fishes. The ducks are especially friends of mine, which I refrain from trying to eat. Frankly, we get along splendidly. At night I can sit in the cockpit and watch the water and stars, or go belowdecks and sleep with my people. I have my own litterbox, which they keep (mostly) fastidiously clean. I have a waterbowl which I love to drag around, and the food is good. It is, all in all, a wonderful lifestyle for a cat.

But there are some challenges to being a truly great Ship's Cat (and I suppose, by extension, Ship's Dog, though I can't imagine that) that I thought I might detail to those of you of the furred persuasion that aspire to this life.

First of all, boats are small spaces. For my part, I genuinely like my people and like being around them. Even when they are off the boat, I follow them about to make sure they stay out of trouble. Like I said, I'm a wonderful personal assistant. If you are of a more solitary bent, though, or dislike constant human contact, this might not be the life for you.

Then there is the matter of the space. As I said before, boats seem created just for cats, with so many interesting crawlspaces, defensible positions, and overlooks available for our use. But the small space means you've got to be good with your aim vis-a-vis the litter box, and consistent in it's use, or you will most definitely come into conflict with your humans.

The water and weather can be an issue as well. Rain on a boat



It's about TIME you got off the computer so I can use it.



The collar is not merely a fashion accessory: It give me the power to locate my humans.

can be LOUD. Wind can knock us about, which I do not like at all. Though I've never suffered from it, some Ship's Cats (and presumably other pets) can become seasick, which would be unpleasant. The weather is just something with which one deals on a vessel, but it bears considering. As to the water: I am a sveldt (okay so I'm big boned) graceful creature of amazing coordination, but occasionally—just OCCASIONALLY, mind you—the boat moves just the wrong way when I'm coming aboard or walking down the gunwale and I, um, miss. Living on a boat means you really need to know how to swim, and being able to climb up the dock pilings is also a plus. As I say, it doesn't happen often, but it can happen. As it is, the few times the misfortune occurred to me, I just swam over to one of the pilings, climbed up to the dock, got aboard, and spent the next few hours putting my fur back in order.

Then there is the matter of other people, other spaces, and travel. First of all, Marinas are full of other folk, other cats, even dogs, and you need to be okay with that. People may, of course, want to adore you. That's only right and proper, and you need to be friendly and not a threat to them

and their often clueless offspring, but you need to set limits and you need to be happy with staying close to ship when appropriate. Marinas can also be full of large, dangerous, terrifyingly loud equipment that could crush a kitty in a heartbeat. Even if you get to go ashore—and many of my compatriots do not—you need to be comfortable with keeping close to home. Losing your people or your people losing you would be awful.

In that regard, if you'll notice some of my more handsome portraits in this fine publication, you may note a stylish diamond hanging from my collar. As fashionable as that is, it has a purpose: its a Tile, a bluetooth tracking device. With it, the captain can always find me with his phone if he needs me (and, not unimportantly, I can help him FIND his phone by a simple tap on the tile). It makes us all feel much more secure.

But taken all into consideration, if the minor downsides don't bother you, being a Ship's Cat may be a wonderful life choice for you. I feel fortunate that my people found me and gave me this opportunity to be with them in so beautiful a place. We're happy here aboard ship. I think you might be as well.

Now, if you'll excuse me, the ducks need me for something. They're amazingly stupid, but I'm happy to help. All part of the Job.

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