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Upper Bay Boating

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The 2020 Boating Season is here

As I write this, spring is right around the corner. Some days in February and early March it seemed it was already here. Some of you are starting to get your boats ready for the 2020 boating season. If you are a DIY type you can save some money, and don't have to be on the marina's commissioning schedule. Sure you might have a few aches and pains, but it's worth it once you are back in the water enjoying yourself. If you are getting a bit older and prefer to pay someone, there are several good marinas that advertise in this magazine. I have known most of them for years, and believe you will be treated fairly. Just do yourself a favor and call soon to make the arrangements.

With the April issue we begin our monthly schedule of Upper Bay Boating. We had of few requests for a subscription to the magazine. As a one man show, it would be difficult to do, so I'll say not now, but never say, never. For now, you can read the magazine online by visiting our website www.upperbayboating.com and we are available at 100's of locations around the upper bay, and portions of Delaware and Pennsylvania.

When you are out on your boat this season, please send in your photos of your time out on the upper bay, and share them with me. My email address is dave@upperbayboating.com My hope is that the non-boaters whom happen to pick up and see those photos in this magazine will say to themselves "hey that looks like a whole lot of fun" and take the plunge. Although the old joke is "a boat is a hole in the water that you throw money into", I prefer to say whatever you spend on a boat is an investment in creating new memories for your family, and a bond you will share with them for a lifetime.



***Have a happy and safe 2020 boating season,
Dave***

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photo by Tom Scilopoti

Dirty Boat? Clean it up!

By Wendy Gilbert – Features Editor

What began as a mild, albeit morbid curiosity a month ago, for many of us has morphed into a daily (if not more often) habit of checking in the global spread of the corona virus or Covid 19.

How many more cases?

How many deaths?

Where?

When will the first case be discovered near me?

Do we pay more attention to the voices of reason or the voices of fear? Spot news reminding us that other conditions and diseases are more likely to kill us, doesn't really help. Nor do historical "look backs" at the Bubonic Plagues that scourged Europe.

Not at all.

Neither does the idea that folks over a certain age (oh, so far away for our newly minted broadcasters and podcast stars) are really the only likely to actually die from it. Guess they just aren't that close to grandpa.

Two-hour town hall meetings hosted by the whitest guy in America, was an interesting call, but by morning, the numbers keep on rolling.

Well, those numbers roll up, my hard-earned stocks are plummeting. I'm not sure which is making me feel the most ill. But it could be worse, my pantry could be empty or I could be on a cruise ship. Thankfully, my brother

and his family just completed a cruise yesterday and are headed home. I'll bet there was some serious hand-washing and social distancing going on there.

All of this information, got me to thinking about boats.

Can't get better at social distancing than that!

Of course spring commission and cleaning is going to be extra thoughtful this season.

Germiest places onboard:

Anything that multiple folks touch – handrails, cleats, boat hooks, etc.

Naturally the head. And the galley.

Electronics, helm – you get the idea.

It can be difficult to keep ample supplies of hot water and soap at all times, so supplement with hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes. And good luck finding them in stock. But don't worry, I'm sure there's a YouTube video out there that will show us how to DIY our own. In the meantime, you won't just be pleasure cruising this season – you'll be practicing social distancing!

Wendy Gilbert



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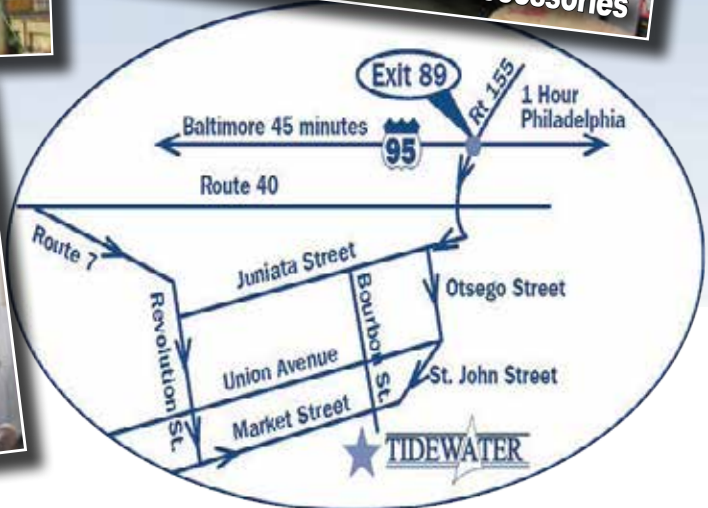
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Bringing in the beauty near the Bay

By **Wendy Gilbert**- Features Editor

Birds, bees and hummingbirds

For those of us fortunate enough to bed down near the glorious estuary called the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, there is much we can do to aid its health.

From picking up trash, following "the rules" (and yes, Maryland has LOTS of them) to planting native plants and trees.

Sometimes, we have to provide a little incentive. What's in it for you?

Well, do you like hummingbirds, bees and butterflies?

Would you like them to visit, stay healthy and do what birds and bees do?

Of course you do.

Hummingbirds

Hummingbirds are amazing creatures. Beautiful and speedy. Their wing-beats have been measured at 200 per second. Hummingbirds can hover and when necessary even fly backwards. These agile birds feed on nectar, small insects and, of course, water. To attract them to your yard, plant bee balm or trumpet creeper. If you like to provide nectar feeders, please don't add red dye to the solution. The hummers will find your feeder without the color.

Making solution is easy. Use four parts water to one part sugar (not honey). Boil the water, turn off the heat, and add the sugar. Remember to thoroughly clean feeders every three or four days and refill with fresh solution.

Of the 340 species of hummingbirds in the world, only one breeds here in Maryland. The Ruby-throated hummingbirds migrate here from Southern Mexico and Central America every spring and return in the fall. Males normally arrive first and scout out territories rich in food. Setting out feeders now will attract the males to your area. Leave feeders up through the fall months to provide these migratory birds with food for their journey. Also, migrating birds moving through the area will have a place to refuel.

Butterflies and bees can add a special grace to your garden and both play an important ecological role in the reproduction of plants. Butterflies in Maryland have evolved

to make the most use of native plants. If you would like your garden to become a butterfly "nursery", then you may want to include those plants that are used by caterpillars. These plants are referred to as 'host' plants.



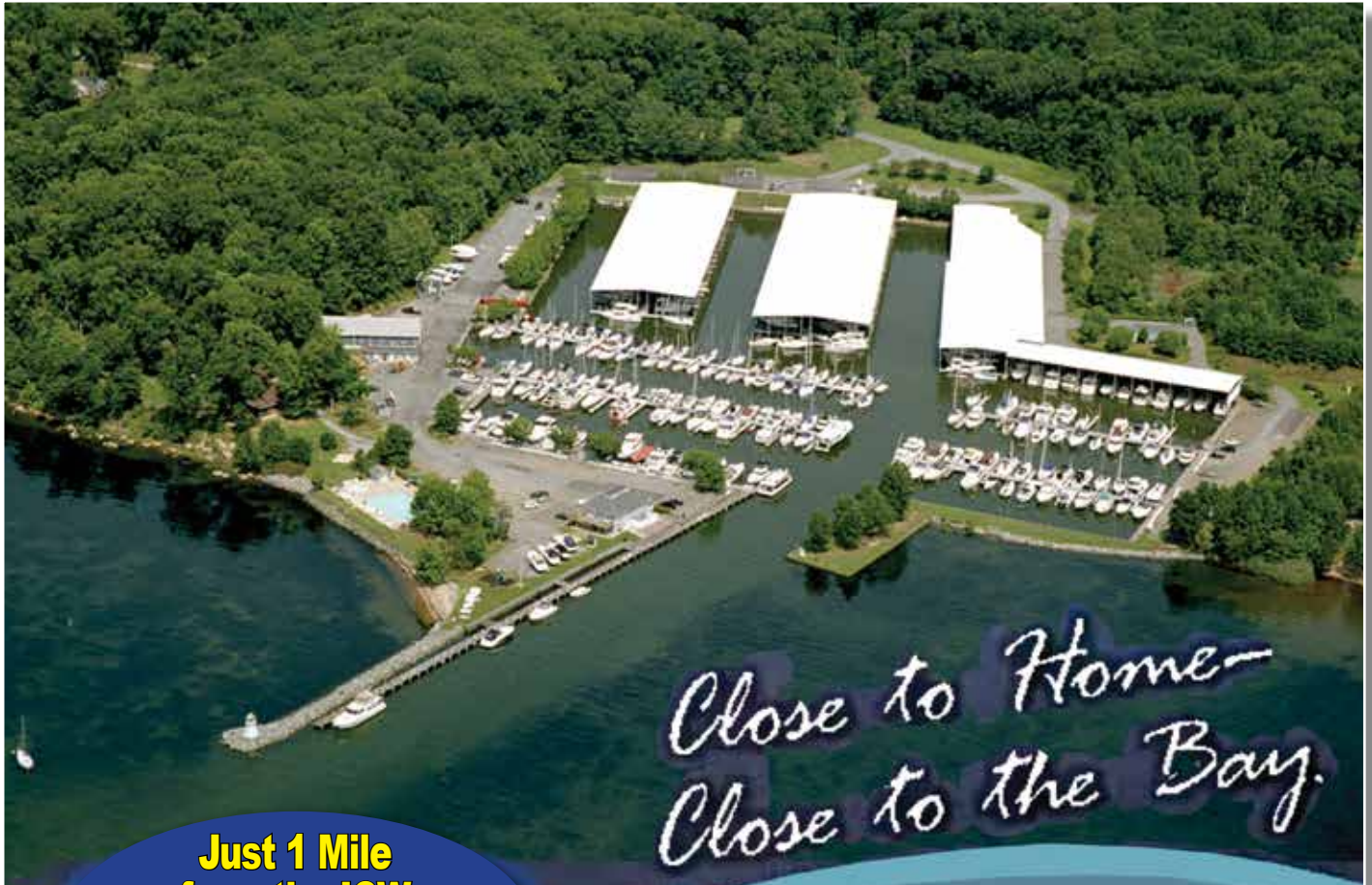
Donna Bedell

American Lady – Pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*) American Snout – Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) Black Swallowtail – Black snakeroot (*Sanicula canadensis*) Gray Hairstreak – White Oak (*Quercus alba*) Great Spangled & Variegated Fritillaries – Violets (*Viola* spp.) Hackberry Emperor – Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) Monarch – Milkweeds (*Asclepias incarnata*, *A. tuberosa*) Mourning Cloak – Black willow (*Salix nigra*) Northern Pearly-Eye – Wild oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) Pearl Crescent – White wood aster (*Aster divaricatus*) Questionmark – American Elm (*Ulmus americana*) Red Admiral – Wood nettle (*Laportea canadensis*) False nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*) Red Spotted Purple – Wild cherry (*Prunus serotina*) Silver Spotted Skipper– Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) Spicebush Swallowtail – Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) Tiger Swallowtail – Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) Viceroy – Black willow (*Salix nigra*) Zebra Swallowtail – Paw

(*Asimina triloba*)

List provided by University of Maryland Extension Service
Bees are a great addition to any garden, especially because they perform important pollination exercises. In addition to cover and food, insects require a water source. I use a large terracotta saucer. The large pot broke (oh well). Experts suggested (and I tried it) to add a layer of sand and some flat stones before adding the water. I will add that all kinds of creatures have been drinking from this communal watering hole.

My garden is not an ever-flowering proposition as the large deer population find flowers very tasty at this time of year. That said, I do try and the flowers that do survive, now thrive.



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That "Things To Do" List

by L Alan Keene

Well, it won't be long NOW! The bottom's been scraped and painted and that leaky window fixed. That gouge from the fuel dock last fall has been filled with gelcoat.... and one more coat of wax should keep that ugly brown stain off the waterline this year. (It better!) And the teak? What about the teak? Well, that can be done almost anytime, right?

OK. You've completed the spring ritual for the umpteenth time....gone over her inch by inch, convinced that you know her body better than you do your own. You've checked and re-checked that ambitious "things to do" list that you made up last Fall and you have pronounced her ready ... ready for another season out on the Bay.

But, as you prepare to ease her into the water this year, ask yourself how much you really know about the water you're easing her into? How much do you really know about the Chesapeake? Oh sure, you have all the charts so depth and underwater obstructions aren't a problem, but I'm not talking about navigational knowledge here ... I'm talking about information that will bring a new appreciation for the body of water our boats call home.

For example, did you know that the shoreline of the Bay and its tidal tributaries is almost 12,000 miles long.... stretched end to end a longer shoreline than California, Oregon, and Washington combined?

Or did you know that the Chesapeake is called an estuary -- a body of water that opens into the ocean and mixes the freshwater from its rivers with the saltwater of the ocean? And not just any old estuary, mind you, but the largest one in North America?

Did you know that the Bay is 200 miles long and ranges from 3.4 miles wide near Turkey Point to 35 miles across near the mouth of the Potomac? With a surface area of almost 4,500 square miles? And an average depth of just 21 feet?

And I bet you didn't know that whales can be found in the southern Chesapeake each year as they migrate along the Atlantic coastline. Humpback whales along with pilot and minke whales are frequently spotted swimming in the saltier waters of the lower Bay.

And can you believe that water from as far away as West Virginia and New York drains into the Chesapeake?.... and that over 15 million people live in this watershed area that also includes parts of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia?

Or how about this? Of the 150 major rivers and streams that feed the Bay, did you know that the Susquehanna provides a full half of all the freshwaterfreshwater -- about 19 million gallons per minute!

And as you're sitting down to that crab cake dinner in Middle River or Baltimore or Havre de Grace, be aware that that body of water you're looking out on produces 500

million pounds of seafood every year! 500 million pounds!

And listen to this! The Bay supports over 3,600 species of plants, fish, and animals and is home to 29 different species of birds. In fact, the Chesapeake is a major stop over along the Atlantic Migratory Bird Flyway, with one million waterfowl taking up residence during the winter months.

And finally, as you're about to slip your powerboat or sloop, runabout, daysailer, or cruiser into the cool Spring waters of the Bay this year, be aware that this wonderful body of water isn't as healthy as it should be. Be aware that it needs our attention too, even more than that leaky window that you sealed or that unsightly scrape that you filled. This American treasure that provides us with endless hours of joy and relaxation desperately needs the attention of those who use it most....boaters.

If the Chesapeake is to be enjoyed by our children and our children's children, we, as boaters, must take an active role in the effort to protect the Bay from present and future pollutants..... pollutants that threaten to choke off the life that abounds within those 4,500 square miles.

And how do we do that, you ask? What can we do?

Besides supporting the efforts of the numerous non-profit Chesapeake Bay restoration groups through our monetary donations and volunteer service, there are simple things that we, as residents of the Bay's watershed, can do to help improve the Bay's health. While they may seem insignificant on an individual basis, if all those who love the Bay joined in, real results can be seen. Here are a few things that we can do:

- 1) NEVER throw anything, but a fishing line, overboard!
- 2) Pick up paper wrappers, cigarette butts, plastic soda bottles, plastic bags etc. whenever and wherever you see them, even if you're miles from the Bay. They may eventually wind up there.
- 3) Reduce your use of lawn and garden fertilizer. Believe it not, much of what you put down on your lawn finds its way into storm sewer systems and eventually into the Bay, generating oxygen depriving algae growth.
- 4) Avoid using toxic pesticides. They can kill fish and wildlife.
- 5) Plant trees or native ground covers that can help prevent harmful runoff.
- 6) Pick up after your pet. Nature's deposit is fertilizer, too.

So this year, when you're working on that nautical "things to do" list, don't pronounce your boat ready for another season until you've crossed off #1) HELP THE BAY! If we boaters don't put it right up at the top of our list, then our children and grandchildren may never need a "things to do" list at all.



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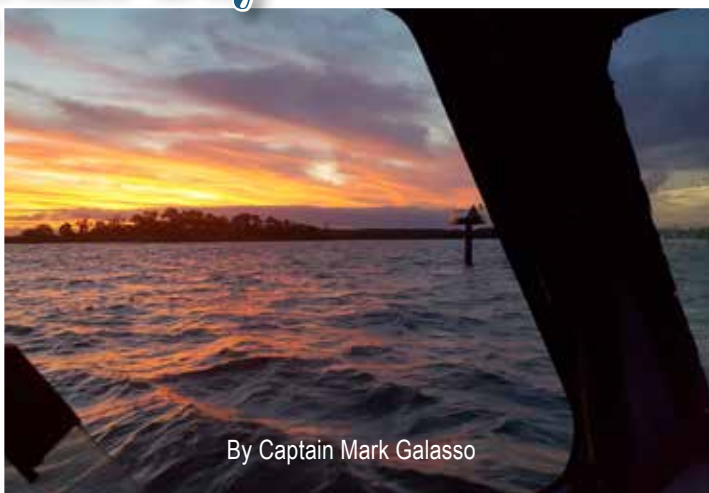
Maryland's Chesapeake Bay- "A State of Mind"

Though we would be hard pressed to completely lay claim to the Chesapeake Bay no one can deny its waters are the lifeblood of Maryland's recreational being. Whether you hunt, fish, sail or just enjoy a moment of peace and serenity after a hard day's work in Maryland or DC people flock like seagulls to the shores of "The Bay". Almost every individual in our State derives some sort of pleasure or income that can trace its roots back to the Chesapeake's waters. Most people live close to the Bay and its tributaries so they can conveniently enjoy their leisure time. This creates a high demand for waterfront homes or properties with water views or access. In turn this demand highly inflated property values which in turn results in large tax revenues for our state. These revenues create jobs as our State tries to keep up with the ever increasing demands on our roads and bridges. And the wages paid by the State and its many contractors helps fuel Maryland's retail economy. I.e. shops, restaurants and countless small businesses who in turn contribute to Maryland's economy with sales taxes and other fees. Maryland's tourist economy is also dependent on the Chesapeake. Hotels, bars and restaurants also cater to visitors from all over the world who spend their dollars here, some of which get back to the State in taxes and fees.

I'll admit to being a "Come Here" or the dreaded "Chicken Necker". I wasn't born here, but in the 45 years I've lived here I have gotten a deep appreciation for the Chesapeake and I hope I never take it for granted. I constantly hear our politician's debate over budgets and taxes and how to balance the needs of the people and the needs of our small State. I can't help but think the Chesapeake doesn't get its due. Three of the hottest topics in Maryland right now are education, violence and taxes on retirement income. The environment and the Bay get very little attention by comparison and when it comes to budgeting very little reward.

Let's look at a couple of thoughts. First of all retirement taxes. You might ask what this has to do with the Bay. I'm going to tell you. The people who pay the most in retirement taxes and property taxes like the Chesapeake so much they are willing to live here for most of the year and not in Florida or Delaware. And they spend money besides their taxes at Maryland businesses. And many of them continue to work while they enjoy the Bay lifestyle.

Second, violence. We hear about it every night in the news. And everyone points fingers and blames everyone else. The fact is many of these criminals don't live a Bay lifestyle. They learned at an early age that the criminal lifestyle was the only one. You would be amazed at how many inner city kids don't know the Chesapeake Bay exists just a few miles away. They're too busy in survival mode joining gangs and trying to show



By Captain Mark Galasso

how tough they are so they don't get bullied. I've seen their faces when they get on the water. They're fascinated, no mystified would be a better term. But still we feed their bodies with school programs but not their souls with field trips and the like. And that leads to education.

I can't say we do nothing with education. I cheer every time I hear of environmental education programs. They just aren't reaching enough kids. Whenever Maryland needs money the buzzword is education. We needed to have gambling because all the new revenue would go toward education. We needed more fees like the flush tax or project open space. Let's use these monies for the Bay. I submit the education a youngster gets by spending quality time on the water is just as important towards their education as sitting in a classroom. Many of our young well educated people are leaving the state. And it's not always about lack of jobs or cost of living. Many times it's because they just haven't learned to appreciate what we have and go elsewhere looking for something. And the scary thing is they are not even sure what they are looking for. They just know it's not here.

To the life of me I could never figure out why the restaurant associations and hotel associations of Maryland never got involved in the fight to protect our Bay. They have as much to lose as those of us who work on the water. And the money they pay the State in fees and taxes is substantial. We are always at a crossroads in the fight to protect the Bay but never more than now. And there are some opportunities for everyone to be involved.

Educate yourself. See what's happening and how you can get involved. You have to look for it. It's not on the evening news. Join groups that are in the know. They're out there. Boating clubs, River keepers, Environmental groups and Fishing groups. They need you and we need them. Somehow we need to make a cleaner Chesapeake everyone's priority. Summer is right around the corner!



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Springtime Bass

By Tim Sherman

With the exceptionally mild winter we've had, you can bet that the lifecycle of the fish in the upper Chesapeake is ahead of its annual schedule. The perch runs should be robust, as should be the migration of shad. For me, when the rod loads up with the year's first largemouth bass, it's game on. The best place to fish for largemouth bass in spring on the upper bay is the Susquehanna River and Flats. From Lapidum and Port Deposit up in the river, out to Swan Creek and Carpenter Point on the Flats; the area has a variety of habitat and food sources that bass covet.

Bass live their lives in cycles. Their movements throughout the year are predictable, especially in spring. Early on, it's all about feeding. You can follow bass from deeper wintering haunts to shallow spawning flats from late March to early June. In early spring, you will find bass in areas that have a close shallow-to-deep transition. They are also found on shorelines with a moderate depth and good cover. Bass move from deep water to shallow and back again depending on the cards Mother Nature deals them. You may find them in deeper water early in the day, then near the shore as the sun warms up the shallows. A cold snap after a multi-day warming trend typically pushes bass back to the deep water. Along those moderate depth banks, bass will hold tight to rock and wood cover when that cold front moves in.

You will find transition areas along the north and back channels. The Perryville side of the lower river has a shallow grassy shoreline with a few rock jetties. This shoreline runs out to the north channel only a couple hundred yards away. The back channel has the luxury of the moderate depth banks that stretch from Havre de Grace to Swan Creek, and the flats on the opposite side. Look for moderate-depth, rocky banks along the Aberdeen Providing Grounds and on the Harford County side of Garrett Island.

There is a standard set of lures for springtime bass fishing. Many anglers carry crankbaits, rattle traps, and



spinnerbaits for eager bass. Red is the most renowned color for a rattle trap. For crankbaits, color patterns that feature chartreuse – fire tiger, spring craw, blue or black back/chartreuse – are commonly used. Shad patterns are used if the river and flats are flowing clean and clear. You can't go wrong with a chartreuse/white spinnerbait with tandem willow blades. When bass pull back to deep water and hunker down on shoreline cover, slower tactics are needed. A tube dragged along the leading edge of the channel, or through rocks and wood cover is a good choice. If you want to really gear down, try a drop shot rig with a 4-inch finesse worm.

Bass soon enter the prespawn stage of spring. They will move to shallow areas, feeding and looking for prime spawning habitat. Furnace and Mill Creeks and Poplar Point on the Cecil county side, and Swan Creek south of the

HdG are all productive areas. You can also look out on the main flats themselves. Know the area. They are called "flats" for a reason.

The choices of lures for prespawn bass seem endless. However, you can go with a select few baits. For crankbaits, choose shallow running models and square bills. Try black back/chartreuse, shad, and blue gill patterns, and ¼-ounce rattle traps in baitfish colors. A spinnerbait is a good choice, but switch to a model with a rear willow blade. Work in shad and blue gill pattern skirts. A chatter bait or swim jig with a skirt in these hues should be equally effective. If you see surface activity, there is no reason not to try a popper or a surface walker. For slower presentations try the tube or a small jig along hard cover, and within pockets of grass beds.

The first fish of the year is exciting no matter what you fish for your first time out. That first nibble, nudge, or strike sets the tone. I am hoping to be successful my first time out. It will likely be searching for bass on the Susquehanna.

Good luck this year.

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Size Matters

By Doug Dawson



Boats come in all shapes and sizes; but nothing is more confusing than the length of a boat. How long is it really? How do you measure? From what point to what point? Why so many measurements? What difference does it make?

How do you know what size your boat really is?

Size Matters

Using the correct size for each scenario is most important, whether you are buying, selling, storing, docking, trailering or keeping your boat in a boathouse; but, how do you know what size to use?

LOA

Length Overall (LOA) is measured from the tip of the bow in a straight line along the centerline to the stern of the pleasure craft. If the bow pulpit or swim platform is molded with the boat, it is included in the LOA. If the bow pulpit or swim platform is bolted on, it was not included in the LOA prior to the 1980's. Since the 1980's, the LOA has been redefined by boat manufacturers to include all appendages i.e. pulpit and platform.

During the transition period in the late 1980's, until the mid 1990's, boat manufacturers transitioned from the old LOA (Actual Hull Length) to the new LOA (including the platform and pulpit) to market their vessels as larger, even though the cabin interiors and cockpits were unchanged.

This created confusion in the marketplace when some advertised the longer length, while others stayed with advertising the hull only length. As a result, boat buyers were having great difficulty comparing differently promoted boats that were actually the same.

This confusion continues as these products are sold over and over in the used/preowned market by marinas and brokers. Some manufacturers still use the LOA to include the hull and platform, but not the bow pulpit/anchor roller and anchor. In other words, it is not consistent; so, beware when comparing.

LOH

The Length of the Hull (LOH) is the actual length of the boat from the transom to the bow of the boat; excluding the swim platform, excluding the bow pulpit and excluding the stretched taffy bow. This measurement term has just come into existence since the late 80's, when these appendages were added to the hull/deck mold. Previously, LOA was the hull length, but now LOA includes all appendages that stick out fore and aft. See LOA description above.



LWL

A vessel's waterline length (LWL) is the length of a boat at the waterline. The LWL will be shorter than the LOA as most boats have bow and stern protrusions that make the LOA greater than LWL. Waterline length applies more to sailboats than power boats.

Sheer line Length

The sheer line length is the measurement from the transom corner all the way along the outside edge and across the bow to the centerline. Many boat manufacturers up until the 80's, used this much larger measurement to make their boats sound larger than they actually were. Some even omitted advertising the LOA, promoting just the sheer line length.

Some used this longer length in their model number designation. So, if the 22' hull centerline hull measured 24' or 25', the long way around the outside edge of the boat, it had a model number designation as 240 or 250.

Model Number Length

The model implied the length of the boat; for example, a 350 or a 3500 implied that the boat is 35'. In many cases, it is 33' something or 34' something including pulpit and platform, so the hull centerline length could be as short as 31' or 32'.

Getting specifications for a used/pre-owned boat will help you make a more informed buying decision. This is only one of the many reasons, that boaters visit the OldBoatBrochures.com library at www.oldboatbrochures.com.

Metric Length

Metric lengths are usually printed alongside the Imperial/US measurement. Metric length model numbers confused most North American boaters, because they are not familiar with metric. Metric measurements and model numbers are known and popular in Europe.

LOS

The length over spars (LOS) is a lesser used term from the distant past. This is the length from the end of the outermost protruding booms/spars at the forward and aft ends of sailboat/sailing vessels. It includes the bowsprit. It is also known as Length Extreme or LE, and nobody except charter firms, show-offs, or marina managers take this length seriously.

LOD

The length on deck (LOD) is another distant past term. The deck is usually shorter than the LOA. LOD length means a boat without the aft spar & bowsprit overhang.

Square Foot

The area the boat covers i.e. the widest point of the beam multiplied by the LOA is the square foot calculation.

For Winter Storage in a storage shed, warehouse or storage yard, marinas usually charge by the square foot of occupied space.

Size Matters when Buying

Knowing the actual "real" length of the boat you are about to buy, whether you are buying used/pre-owned or new, will arm you with excellent valuable information when comparing different brands, in the boat buying process.

Some brands of boats were labelled to imply that they were larger than the competition, while the competition may have been using a different measurement. It appeared to be smaller than their competition, but accommodation areas are the same.

Comparing the actual length allows you to compare "apples to apples".

Boats tend to grow or be longer, when they are being sold or bragged about. Don't get ripped! Compare actual hull lengths without pulpits, platforms and creative marketing.

Size Matters When Selling

When selling your boat, it is very important to advertise the correct size of your boat. Stating a size that would mislead a buyer could end up in a legal mess. Be sure to explain which measurement you are using, i.e. whether the platform and pulpit is included in the measurement.

Size matters for Seasonal Docking

Most boaters have a permanent dock during the boating season and prefer the shorter measurement. Many dockage fees are based on the length of the boat. In some cases, the marina will use the Hull Length, and in some cases, it will be the LOA. It all depends on the marina's policy. Knowing this before your sign up, could save you money.

Size matters when Transient Docking

When cruising, and staying at different marinas, boaters also prefer the shorter measurement. But, marinas need to utilize the longer measurement, when tying vessels to a long dock like a parallel dock at a municipal pier, lock approach walls etc.; so that, the boats don't overlap each other and/or strike one another.

Transient slips are sometimes rented as a unit, regardless of the size of the boat in the space, while others calculate the dockage using LOL or Hull Length.

Quit often, marinas have transient parallel docking along a pier/wharf, and there are different methods for calculating the dockage fee. Some charge by LOA, while others maintain that the measurement should be from the bowline cleat to the stern line cleat on the dock, because they maintain nobody else can use that entire

space. So, a 30' boat could have a bowline running forward on the dock, and a sternline running aft on the dock taking up 40' or 50' and the dockage fee would be calculated on the 40' or 50', not the length of your boat.

Others simply offer a length of the pier pre-marked in 50' spaces for a fee, no matter what size the boat is under 50 feet.

Size matters when storing

For Winter Storage in a storage shed, warehouse or storage yard, marinas usually charge by the square foot of occupied space; i.e. the widest point multiplied by the LOA.

When shopping for a winter storage location, knowing how the marina charges will be a great help in your comparison and decision making.

Size Matters when Trailering

It is most important to not only know the LOA and width of your boat, but also the weight, if you are going to be trailering, so that you can match it with the right trailer.

Knowing the correct specs for you boat could prevent your purchase of a trailer that is too small. Also, boaters who are storing their trailerable boat in their own garage, need to know the length of the boat including the motor/drive and the trailer tongue. We've all seen on the internet, the garage door cut out around the trailer tongue.

Getting Specifications

To find out the length(s) of your boat, you could measure it yourself OR, refer to the original manufacturer's specifications in the original old boat brochure.

Old Boat Brochures has a library of over 12,000 old boat brochures dating back to the 1950's, both power and sail. There is only one brochure for each brand per year in the collection, with a few exceptions where there are duplicates.

For a small fee, Old Boat Brochures will scan the original and email as a pdf file. When a duplicate is available, it can be purchased as a printed original.

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Striped Bass Rule Changes

By Tim Campbell

Several major changes to striped bass fishing regulations take effect this year for recreational anglers. In some ways the changes may help ensure the future of striped bass, but in other ways the changes are complicated and the rationale is not always clear.

First, the striped bass Catch and Release season on the Susquehanna Flats has been shortened by a month. The C&R season was open in March, but now closed for April. The season used to go from March 1 to May 3. The Department of Natural Resources used non-validated surveys provided by the Marine Recreational Information Program to justify shortening the C&R season. However, previous studies conducted by DNR when the Flats season first opened have shown very low mortality rates for striped bass during March and April. Water temperatures then are below 65 degrees which is favorable for catch and release fishing. Moreover, the vast majority of striped bass caught on the Flats in the spring are small, resident males. The relatively few, big, migratory females caught are released and swim away, perhaps to be caught another day.

Second, the trophy trolling season in the main stem of the bay below the Brewerton Channel has also been shortened. The trophy trolling season used to open the third week of April, but now it doesn't open until May 1. Most of the female breeders will be long gone by mid-May. As in prior years, the minimum keeper size striped bass is 35 inches long with one fish per person, per day. That means any fish less than 35 inches will have to be released. Unfortunately, after being hooked on heavy trolling gear, pulled behind a boat at 3 or 4 mph, hauled on deck, maybe measured, then heaved overboard, many fish don't survive. Permitting a trophy season seems to defeat the purpose of trying to increase the spawning stock.

Third, the use of non-offset circle hooks introduced in 2018 is now set to be made permanent. Therefore, whenever chumming or live-lining, non-offset circle hooks must be used.



The idea is to lessen the amount of dead discards common in the summer when the water temperatures are in the 80's and 90's and a lot of anglers are fishing with bait rather than lures. Circle hooks reduce mortality in striped bass. The DNR plans to continue to educate the public on the proper use of circle hooks.

More changes to the striper fishery are coming. DNR proposed three different management options for the summer and fall striped bass season which are outlined on the DNR website. The fishing public had a short time to choose one of the three options and submit comments. The last date for comments was March 18. DNR is to post the new summer/fall rules by April 1.

The options DNR proposed are essentially outlined as follows: Option #1 is for an 18 inch minimum size with one fish per person, per day. The season would close December 15.

Option #2 is for a 19 inch minimum size with one fish per person, per day and an in-season closure from August 16 to August 31. Charter boats would get to keep two fish per person, per day if they choose to participate in a new Pilot Program. The season would close December 10.

Option #3 would also be for a 19 inch minimum with one fish per person, per day. DNR would consider alternative in-season closure dates as long as the dates were at least 16 days long and occurred between July 16 and August 31. Charter boats would get to keep two fish per person, per day if they want to participate in the Pilot Program. The season would close December 10.

In my opinion, striped bass season should be closed in July and August because the water is too hot. Stripers don't do well in water temps over 75 degrees, much less 80 or 90 degrees. Besides, there are many other species to target in the summer including bluefish, catfish, and white perch to name a few. Go to www.eregulations.com/maryland/fishing/ striped-bass for more info.

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Maryland Waterways Foundation is exploding with action and support!

In March, MWF had a very successful Bull & Oyster Roast with Coastal Conservation Association at Rosedale Gardens. The two organizations work great together and share the same vision of conservation, sustainability, education and improving the Chesapeake Bay. Over 250 people enjoyed delicious food, chatting with friends and supporting two great organizations.

Maryland Waterways foundation has been keeping busy applying for grants, raising awareness, setting up future events and working with communities like Sussex, Turner Station and even branching out to Lutherville for cleanups. With our new 28' Cleanup trailer, equipped with a private bathroom, all the gloves, pickers, bags and buckets and even a Gator ATV vehicle needed for a cleanup, we can set up anywhere someone lets us know a cleanup is needed.

In March, a cleanup was set up in Lutherville, just behind the 1200 block of York Road. Are there waterways in Lutherville? That's the first response of many, but yes indeed there are many small winding creeks and storm drain ditches that continue to Long Quarter Branch, part of the Loch Raven watershed. Stemmers Run Middle School Teacher, Jason Adams reached out to MWF and Dulaney Valley Improvement Association to organize troops to clean up the trash, most likely blown from the York Road corridor into the creeks. Jason has worked with us in the past, bringing about 100 students to

Cox's Point Park for a cleanup, teaching the importance of proper disposal of trash and the ill affects it will otherwise have on our waterways.

In case you were not aware, Earth Day is April 22 and this year is the 50th Anniversary. There are many Earth Day events around the world and locally. In this part of the world, MWF will be working with Key Brewing Company in Dundalk. While they offer delicious craft beer in their tap room, they are also very concerned about our Earth and the Environment. Key saves their grain bags for us to be reused as trash bags and sets up a cleanup on the mile-long road leading to their brewery. This year's cleanup will be on April 25 from 9 – noon, MWF will provide bags, gloves and pickers while Key will provide cold refreshment and grill delights. Come on out and help and then check out the Key tap room. The following day, April 26th MWF will be at the Earth Day Celebration at Oregon Ridge.

A Big Event is coming on June 6th and we know you won't want to miss it. MWF is having a top-notch event to support our cause of cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay. We will be holding River Fest at the beautiful Conrad's Ruth Villa in Bowley's Quarters with three great bands. We will start the line up with the rambunctious Sherry V and her new

band, next will be Kirk McEwen on vocals with Petty Coat Junction, followed by the incredible Crack the Sky, one of Baltimore's favorite bands. Tickets will be on sale soon and will sell out quickly.

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***MWF is recruiting Environmental College students for our summer internship programs.
If you are interested in cleaning up our waterways, learning to run a boat and explore your
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Rick Carrion is starting his 50th year as the captain of yacht **ELF 1888**. He purchased it July 7, 1971 when he was 19 years old.

"I can appreciate having to sail into a slip, because that is exactly what I had to do if I wanted to go sailing. At the time the engine aboard only made noise cranking from the starter. ELF was then docked along the bulkhead of the Granary's B-dock, which meant I had to push her out of the slip, raise sails and sail down between two long docks passing 25 slips on each side before turning to sail down the Sassafras River. I had to watch the tide and wind very carefully. Then at the end of the day sail



back into the slip.

At the time ELF was yawl rigged with a long bow sprit. I am happy to say the bow sprit NEVER touched the dock or another boat," reports Carrion.

ELF is currently restored to her 1888 configuration with an even longer bow sprit and a very large gaff rig, carrying 2300 sq. ft. of sail. Its home port is at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels. "Now we have an engine and we back into our slip with the main boom overhanging the dock by over 10 feet. And yes it is always challenging no matter what the wind and tide are doing. I have had to single handed dock and tie up many times," Carrion said.

To see additional images of this incredible yacht, visit CYRG.ORG



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BUYING A USED BOAT?

Your marine surveyor is the person with expertise whom you hire to protect your best interests and check everything to make sure a boat is sound. Here's how to find the best one

LIKE A LOT OF FIRST-TIME BUYERS, it's fair to say that the 42-year-old restaurant executive was head-over-heels in love with the boat — in this case, a 28-foot sportfishing boat — and couldn't wait to finish the paperwork and take title. But first — and this really irked him — the local bank was saying he had to have it surveyed. The man reluctantly called the broker, who gave him a shortlist of names. After a little price shopping over the phone, the executive had his surveyor and was only one short step away from owning the boat.

The survey inspection went well; at least it went quickly. The boat was hauled out of the water and the surveyor spent a couple of hours poking around the boat, occasionally pausing to scribble a few comments in a notebook. Two days after the inspection, the survey arrived with a few minor recommendations. The surveyor also placed a value on the boat that was acceptable to the bank, and in short order the executive had his boat.

It would be nice to say that the restaurant executive and his new boat lived happily ever after, but it wasn't to be. Over the following weeks and months, problems arose with a rusted engine mount, a worn cutlass bearing, and the grim discovery of rot in two bulkheads. Every one of the boat's seacocks was "frozen" open, and a badly leaking hose almost sank the boat. Finally, a helpful engine mechanic who was doing some repair work, noticed the

boat's water heater mounted in the engine compartment wasn't ignition-protected and strongly recommended that it be replaced. The end result was that two years and several more repairs later, the sportfisher went up for sale. It was an expensive lesson on the value of a good marine survey.

Finding A Good Surveyor

Finding a competent surveyor may be the final step in a boat purchase, but it could easily be the most important, and should never be taken lightly. Anyone can call himself a marine surveyor; there are no licenses or exams required. One longstanding joke among surveyors is that all it takes to become a "professional" is a business card, a cell phone, and somebody to believe you. Being a competent marine surveyor, on the other hand, requires a good deal more. First it takes expertise, a lot of expertise. The American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) publishes 68 standards totaling over 650 pages that cover everything from a boat's deck hardware to fuel and electrical systems. Being a competent marine surveyor requires a comfortable working knowledge of them all. In addition to ABYC standards, a surveyor must know National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and the Coast Guard's safety requirements, and be familiar with various construction standards (ABS and Lloyds). Needless to say, a good marine surveyor must have a mind for technical details.

These standards are continually being revised and a surveyor has to keep abreast of the changes, which means reading technical books and attending education seminars. The latter involves paying for airfare, hotels, and meals. Good surveyors also invest in expensive moisture meters and multimeters. In a few cases, they may purchase specialty equipment such as hardness testers and ultrasonic thickness gauges. Becoming a competent surveyor involves making a considerable financial commitment.

Surveyors aren't licensed, so the industry is in the position of having to police itself. There are two major surveying organizations, which, among other things, have programs to certify or accredit their members: the National Association of Marine Surveyors (NAMS) and the Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors (SAMS). A NAMS surveyor must have at least five years experience working as a full-time marine surveyor and pass an exam in order to use the initials NAMS-CMS (NAMS Certified Marine Surveyor) after his or her name. A SAMS surveyor who's worked five years as a full- or part-time surveyor and has passed an exam can use the AMS (Accredited Marine Surveyor) credentials. Both organizations have apprentice members who have not yet earned their certification.

Another reliable source for experienced surveyors is the BoatU.S. Referral Listing (www.BoatUS.com/Insurance/survey.asp), which includes certified/accredited NAMS and SAMS members who specialize in pre-purchase surveys as well as independent surveyors who've been approved by an eight-person committee responsible for setting the Association's standards for surveyors. The committee also reviews member complaints, and if necessary removes a surveyor from the listing.

There are a handful of other surveyor organizations, some of which are more credible than others. There are also some very competent marine surveyors who, for one reason or another, don't belong to any surveyor organization. If you're not sure whether BoatU.S. Marine Insurance will accept a survey from someone you've been talking to, call one of our underwriters: 800-283-2883.

What's Covered On A Survey?

Even among the best surveyors, there is no consensus on what is or isn't covered on a pre-purchase survey. NAMS and SAMS both publish voluntary survey report guidelines for their members. (NAMS pub-



Checking for moisture in the keel.

lishes "Recommended Guidelines for Yacht Condition and Valuation Surveys" and SAMS publishes "Recommended Survey Report Content.") BoatU.S. did a poll of SAMS and NAMS members who survey recreational boats that found many of their inspections are consistently the same. A comfortable majority of surveyors said they always sound the boat (using a plastic hammer to detect voids and delamination), reference the ABYC standards, and test electronics to see if they're operable.

There were also some significant variations. For example, only a slight majority of surveyors always use a moisture meter and slightly less than half said they always take the boat on a sea trial (assuming a sea trial is possible). There are even bigger differences with engine inspections. A few surveyors are former mechanics and are qualified to do a complete inspection while others have very little hands-on experience. Most have at least some familiarity with engines but stop short of a complete inspection — oil analysis, compression check, and so on. Using a scale of 0 (no inspection) to 10 (complete mechanical inspection), the poll average of 6.05 indicates most surveyors spend at least some time with engines. Based on the age of the boat, the number of hours on the engine, and what's found during the inspection, a surveyor will often recommend that a mechanic do a more complete analysis. It's usually good advice, although some surveyors include a disclaimer recommending an engine inspection with every survey. The same is true of sailboat rigs — going aloft — and electrical system inspections. The latter can take many hours and is usually recommended with some imports or when an older boat's electrical system has been repeatedly "upgraded."

Bob Adriance is editor of Seaworthy, the damage-avoidance newsletter produced by the BoatU.S. Marine Insurance division. Seaworthy is e-mailed free to Members quarterly.

Boat Buying Basics from BoatU.S.

Buying a used boat can be a stressful undertaking. BoatUS Consumer Affairs created this helpful list of do's and don'ts to help prevent some common boat buying errors.

1. Never buy a boat sight unseen.

Yes, people do it all the time. Go and see the boat in person and inspect it from bow to stern and then take a test ride. If you absolutely can't get there yourself, find a friend or hire someone who can.

2. There is no such thing as a free boat.

If the owner is literally giving their boat away for free, there is a reason. It's up to you to find out why and be smart about calculating the true cost of bringing that "Free" boat back to seaworthy condition. Consider costs of survey, towing, shipping, storage, repairs and slip fees before you take ownership. It may be cheaper in the long run to buy a boat that is in good working condition.

3. Hire a competent marine surveyor.

Even if you're not required to have a survey for insurance or financing, hire your own surveyor to ensure he or she is working on your behalf. Have a separate engine inspection to include a compression check, if appropriate, and oil analysis. The engine is the most frequent problem with a used boat, and engines are usually the most expensive component, often making up half or more of its value. A survey is cheaper than a replacement engine. A survey and sea trial costs about \$15-\$20 per foot.

4. Check for open recalls or problems.

Email ConsumerAffairs@BoatUS.com to request a search of the BoatUS Consumer Affairs Consumer Database to see if the boat or engine you're looking to buy shows up as having a pattern of problems or is the subject of a service bulletin or recall. Finally, check the U.S. Coast Guard website for recalls.

5. Photograph the boat's HIN.

Find the Hull Identification Number (HIN) on the upper part of the starboard side of the transom and make sure it matches both the registration and title. If it doesn't match exactly, at the very least there could be issues retitling the boat. The boat's title will list any liens on the vessel, such as a bank loan that will need to be paid off in order to transfer the title.

6. Protect yourself with a contract.

Most private-party sellers sell their boat in "as-is" condition. As-is sales offer virtually no recourse

against the seller should a problem arise, so having a survey, engine inspection and sea trial is even more important.



A purchase agreement is your final protection. It spells out the details of the sale, including contingencies (such as an unacceptable survey or sea trial, or inability to obtain financing and/or insurance) that allow you to renegotiate or even back out of the deal completely. Generally, there's no legal obligation on the seller's part to volunteer information for which the buyer doesn't ask. Consider adding a line in your purchase contract that asks the seller to state if he or she is aware of any serious defect, prior accident, or sinking in which the boat may have been involved. Don't forget to note the boat's 12-digit HIN and engine serial numbers on all forms. You'll also want to include, in writing, all equipment (along with serial numbers) that is part of the deal, or any repairs to be made by the seller.

For more on buying your next boat go to <https://www.boatus.com/products-and-services/membership/consumer-affairs>

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BOATING Buddies

Boat Buddies Make for a Great Crew

By Montana Grant

Captains must have a crew! What is the point in fishing or boating alone? Having Boat Buddies is essential to having fun and staying safe.

Two heads are always better than one. "So, where do we fish today?" "Oh no, the motor won't start. What do you think is wrong?" A First Mate, tackle handler, Snack Master, Lookout, or just company are all helpful. Making decisions with help is smarter and more fun. Sharing in expenses will also welcome guests back for future trips.

Don't hog the helm! Everyone on board needs to know all the boating tasks! Let everyone practice all the skills. Once they master a task, have them teach the next Boat Buddy. That way if someone gets ill or hurt, the rest of the crew can handle the situation. This includes what happens at the boat ramp, dock, or navigation. Everyone needs to know all the rules, limits, and procedures.

The payoff will happen when you have only two eyes but need four. You are backing the boat and trailer down the ramp and need to know when to stop. Having a Mate watching you back up and get to the float release point



Capt' Tom

of your boat is critical. Communication needs to be taught and learned.

Trolling alone is next to impossible. Every rod you put out makes it even more of a challenge. Maybe the Wicked Tuna guys know better but, in my experience, dealing with

a hooked fish, securing and clearing other rods, navigating, and having fun at the same time is hard. Netting or gaffing a fish by yourself is even tougher.

Navigation, speed, fuel, engine temperature, weather, traffic... There are so many things that Boat Buddies need to pay attention too. More eyes, ears, hands, and brains help. Someone needs to anchor, look for breaking fish, identify landmarks, secure gear, or just look out for problems. Bad weather, crowded waterways, and fatigue can all complicate your boating day.

Invite, Invest, and Share Ownership. When you ask folks to be a part of your crew, they need to feel Invited, Invested, and Share Ownership of your boat to feel safe and welcome. Let them become Invested in the boat's procedures and workings. Boat maintenance is a great way to start the training. Cleaning the boat completely for the next trip is how every cruise should

finish. Too many Captains get stuck with all the work and become reluctant to use the boat more often. Boat Buddies will respect your boat more when they feel personal ownership from cleaning the head, fish box, deck, and...

Recently, I took a trip to Alaska. Our 20-foot enclosed boats were powered by a 90 HP Yamaha outboard. We tagged along with a friend that had fished there before. Our first afternoon out was mostly a test run, just to get familiar with the gear and areas. The main channel has huge tidal swings with powerful currents. On the return to camp, we were following our experienced friends. Suddenly their boat engine died, and they were adrift. Their kicker trolling motor also not working. Both used the same fuel, so it was probably a filter or blockage. The rip tide was ripping and off to the north side was a wrecked sunken boat. Its masts and top bridge were just above the surface sending a bad omen.

My Boat Buddy, Captain Tom quickly swung our boat around and put our stern to their bow, all while we are drifting at several knots onto a shoal, or the wrecked boat. He had to maneuver in several directions at the same time, to line up on a boat that was dead in the water and drifting fast. We were only a few miles from camp but there was

no one to help but us. I quickly used a tow rope to hook onto our friends bow and tied it to our back cleats for the tow. Even at full power, we were barely able to make 5 knots! The tide was ripping faster as we plowed into it. This story had a nice ending. No one was hurt, no gear was damaged or lost, and we made it back to camp in time for dinner. It could have been a lot worse if our friends had no Boat Buddies nearby.

Traveling as a fleet, or with an escort, is a smart way to stay safe. Sailors have done this for centuries. They sailed as a convoy, or with an escort just in case. Columbus had the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria! His Boat Buddies made the passage across the Atlantic together covering each other's backs. In many cases, when ships became separated, they were lost.

When touring the bay, a flotilla of friendly mariners will always end better. Maryland boaters are often inexperienced and loaded with kids and pets. Traveling to a destination as a team is the perfect time for training. If one boat breaks down, you are protected by the other nearby Boat Buddies. Radios, nearby Coast Guard units,



MD DNR and other Boaters will quickly respond but, they often arrive too late to make a difference. Your Boat Buddies are shout away.

The Alaska story took place where we had no radios, were in unfamiliar waters, no emergency rescue, or other support. We were all on our own, together! Fortunately, our day ended safely. Boat Buddy navigation saved the day!

The Chesapeake Bay is a wonderful waterway. When the weather is nice, the waters are calm and forgiving. When you look at the maps, you can see areas with extreme potential for incredibly harsh waters. One of these is just off Sandy Point Park. During a storm, the waves can get HUGE!

No open water is a friendly place to be when things get rough. Boat Buddies can help make sure everyone survives

together. The experience will teach a lot of lessons and make better sailors of all the Boat Buddies.

Anchors aweigh, together!

For more Montana Grant, sail with him at www.montanagrantsfishing.com.

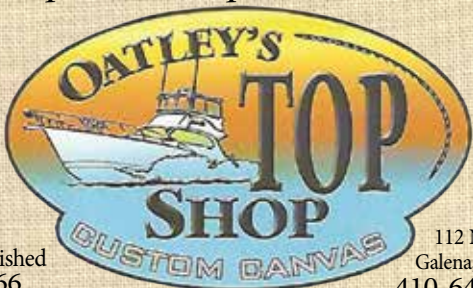
Montana Grant

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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Fishing 2020 Calendar of Events

Fishing Club meetings:

Annapolis Angler's Club – monthly meetings held the 3rd Friday of the month. Meeting is 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Free and open to the public. American Legion Post 7, 1905 Crownsville Rd. For more info go to www.annapolisanglersclub.com



Coastal Conservation Association

– **Greater Baltimore Chapter** monthly meetings held the 4th Monday of the month featuring expert speakers. Meeting is 6:30 to 9:00 pm. Free and open to the public. VFW Post 10067, 6309 Ebenezer Rd. For more info go to www.ccamd.org

Please go to www.ccamd.org for meeting info on all other CCA-MD Chapters including Annapolis, Central Region and Greater Washington.



Essex-Middle River Fishing Club – monthly meetings held the 3rd Tuesday of the month featuring expert speakers. Meeting is 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Free and open to the public. Commodore Hall, 1909 Old Eastern Ave. Contact Frank Holden at flholden@msn.com



Frederick Saltwater Anglers – monthly meetings held the 2nd Wednesday of the month featuring expert speakers. Meeting is 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Free and open to the public. Moose Lodge, 828 E. Patrick St. Frederick, MD For more info go to www.wefishsalt.com



Pasadena Sportfishing Group - monthly meetings held the 2nd Monday of the month featuring expert guest speakers. Meeting is 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Free and open to the public. Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Hall, 161 Ritchie Hwy. For more info go to www.pasadenasportfishing.com



Fishing Tournaments:

17th Annual CCA-MD Kent Narrows Fly & Light Tackle TX – **June 6** www.ccamd.org

9th Annual Eric Altemus Memorial Catfish TX – **June 13** register online at ecacatfishtournament.com or find them on Facebook.

CCA-MD RED TROUT TX, Buzz's Marina – **September 12** to 14 www.ccamd.org

Rock the Choptank TX, Cambridge, MD – **October 24** for info go to rockthechoptank.wixsite.com/rockthechoptank or call 410-463-1822

14th Annual Fish for a Cure TX – **November 7** www.fishforcure.org

2nd Annual Schumann Memorial Winter Classic – **December 5** www.ccamd.org

2020 Chesapeake Bay Sportfishing Association Tournaments:

Spring-Bling Rockfish TX – **May 1 to 3**

Schools-Out Rockfish TX – **June 20**

Ocean City Tuna-Fortuna TX – **June 26 to 28**

Catfish / Snakehead TX – **Dates to be determined**

End of Summer Rockfish TX – **Pending DNR approval**

Fall-Squall Rockin' TX – **November 7 to 8**

Catfish TX – **Dates to be determine**

For info contact Joe Thorpe at jthorpe@cbsfa or call 410-868-5488

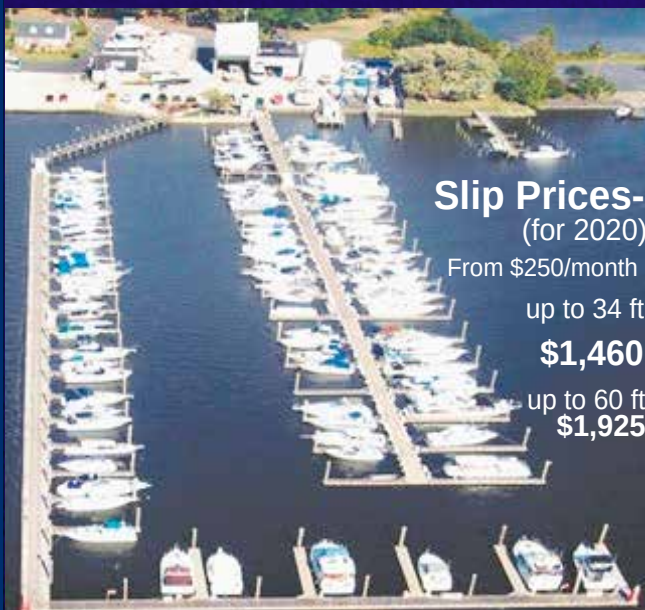


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Live Aboard

by
Don and Gail
Elwell

Early Spring

Spring has come early to the Chesapeake. . . really early in fact. Not that we're complaining, mind you. The trees are already in bud weeks earlier than usual, and cold weather has disappeared from the long term forecast.

One of the great joys of living aboard (or of any kind of cruising for that matter) is the opportunity to get off the dock and explore. So we've been taking sojourns to one of our favorite places here on the upper Bay:

Marshy Point Nature Center. The place is accessible by bus, car, or boat, has several miles of really nice, marked hiking trails, and a wonderful educational center with some really fun and interesting programs open to the public, that and a cool osprey-cam on a nest out in the middle of a platform in dundee creek (at <https://www.marshypoint.org/learn-more/dundee-creek-cam/>)

So on a pretty, warmish morning in our all too early spring, we went hiking. The Vernal Pond is full of peepers at the moment, the cacophony of frogs and toads and other critters can be deafening in the early mornings.

Green is breaking out all over. The lycopodium, a type of club moss and one of the only explosive plants of which I'm familiar (look it up), are starting to cover the wet forest floor.

Take the opportunity to get out and off the boat for a bit after



It's amazing the racket a bunch of little frogs can make.



Lycopodium is one of the first real signs that warmer weather is just around the corner.

haul and hang to pull out our old Blackwater system (I despise the things) and replace it with a composting head, tuning our standing rigging, and making ready for sea. One of the loveliest things about living aboard is that our home is with us. Do we play meticulously which way we want to go, or do we just hit the mouth of the Middle River and see which way the winds are blowing that day and let THAT decide? Either way, its beautiful, and either way, wherever we drop the hook, we're home.

So it's spring?
Where will you go? We can't wait to be back out on the water. See you out there.

**Don and Gail Elwell
and First Cat Magellan
Aboard the SV Constellation**



This is one time of year that "take a hike" isn't insulting someone.

**www.thefloatingempire.com
lifeartwater.blogspot.com
wildshorepress.com**

Photo Gallery



Andrea Rebbert



Thomas Scilopoti



Luz Kolojeski

Cold Cabin and Muddy Creek

Springtime is a great time for paddling some of the side rivers and creeks of the Upper Bay region. One of the best in the region begins with a launch from Cold Cabin boat ramp in Delta, PA. Much of this river trail is along the banks of the Susquehanna River. Currents there are usually manageable, but check water levels before attempting if there have been recent rains. The distant portions of the paddle involve narrow, sometimes shallow, sometimes deep passages between islands, with a lot of submerged rocks. The paddle is best done in a plastic long boat or canoe.

Driving directions to the launch are complicated. I find the best way to find the launch on Google Maps is to search for Starrk Moon Kayaks on Cold Cabin Road. The concrete boat ramp is off a circular parking area at roads end. Or, you could search directly using GPS coordinates: 39.7795, -76.2876. There is parking available for 4-6 cars, but no toilet facilities. This is a community park, so please take out what you carry in. If you need any kayak gear (or are looking for a new or used kayak), you can stop by Starrk Moon on your way in.

The paddle begins with a launch into the Susquehanna, then heads northwest along the western shoreline. Be careful of debris that may be coming downstream if there have been recent storms. The entrance to Muddy Creek is about

one mile upstream. In the Spring, the banks along the Muddy are in bloom with Rhododendron. The steep hillsides with thick, overhanging foliage and numerous rocky outcroppings remind me of what you might expect in a tropical rainforest. Not something 40 miles outside Baltimore. We were able to paddle about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile upstream, to a rocky shelf where the creek changes dramatically. For us, this was the end of the paddle. White water paddlers consider this to be the end of their run also, but they paddle from the other direction; the beginning of Muddy Creek to this point. Here, our only option was to turn around and head back to the mouth.

There is an impressive rock face on the northwestern side of Muddy Creek. Beyond that, there is another public boat launch. However, do not attempt to land here, as landing requires a permit.

Continue several hundred yards more and you will find a small park. The bank here is rather steep, but landing is possible. The park has several picnic tables and a porta-potty. It makes for a nice rest stop.

The park focuses on an old section of the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal. Above the picnic area is Lock 15. It is fenced off to prevent accidents, but if dry there are places at either end where you may enter it on foot to continue your exploration. Informational/historical signage explains the history of the canal system that connected eastern cities in the late 1800's.



KAYAKING ON THE UPPER BAY *continued*

Due East of the Lock 15 park is a grouping of small islands that mark the beginning of a much larger series of islands. Across the river is Lower Bear Island. At one time these islands were homesteaded.

We did not see any remaining structures, but we did see several rooftops on our return route along the eastern edge of the southern-most group.

After lunch we continued northwest. Working your way through the island maze can be challenging without a map. We first chose a path, that in retrospect, took us along the western edge of Peavine Island. Eventually water levels became too shallow to continue and we had to turn back and look for another passage. At its southern tip, we turned into the channel between Peavine and Upper Bear and followed it to the northwestern edge of Crow Island. Current here was high due to the constricted openings between smaller islands to the north. Again, we turned back along Crow to a passage we had noted between Upper and Lower Bear. Shortly into the passage we ran across a group of teenagers that had rafted out to do practice cliff diving. We watched in awe as these young men leaped off a 30 foot edge doing somersaults, swan and sailor dives. As I sat, I couldn't help but wonder which of these young men was the brave soul that first leapt into the waters below, not knowing what lay beneath the surface. Surely, this must be a known swimming hole from years past.

After a short while, we paddled on through the passage, encountering a few ripples along the way. Eventually, we emerged in a broad, mid-river lake where we rested. From the lake I could see the Norman Wood Bridge crossing and



attempted to paddle the main stream to it. But the effort required to continue to the bridge did not justify the small gratification at having done so would provide. I turned and paddled back to the group.

We returned to Cold Cabin along the eastern edge of the islands. First through the channel between Deep Water Island and Upper Bear Island, then between the Bears where we encountered several sets of ripples. Others from our group paddled down along the eastern edge of Lower Bear Island and then the channels between the Chestnuts and Hennerly Islands. We formed up at the tip of Big Chestnut Island. From there we lazily rode the Susquehanna's currents back to Cold Cabin Landing.

If you are looking for a spectacular Spring paddle to begin your paddling season, I highly recommend Cold Cabin, Muddy Creek, and the Islands. The route has it all; flat water paddling, close-in river paddling with beautiful flowering stands of Rhododendron, steep rocky cliff facings and narrow island passages. This is your route.

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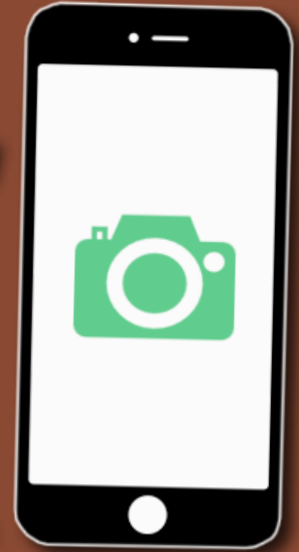
Boat Dog



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