



Email: theforenaft@gmail.com

fore' n aft



Vol. 15 No. 4 August, 2026

PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Christine Flett

CONTRIBUTORS

Mike Simic

Scott Brown

Julie Hinton

Dorothy Fletcher

Mary Game

IN THIS ISSUE

Eclipse, Shooting Stars, Six Planet
Parade and a Viral Hoax.

Drownings on the rise: the role of
unlicensed boat charters.

Around Waupoos Island and
Scotch Bonnet races.

First aid kit essentials:
Don't buy, make it yourself.

A Cautionary Tale:
90 minutes locked in the head.

Safety and Environment:
High Water + bubblers
= Less Weeds

Cooking on Board:
Mexican Street Corn Salad

Reflections in Schoolhouse Bay



Mike Simic photo.

Partial eclipse, shooting stars, six planet parade, lunar eclipse and Project Anchor: Seven Seconds without Gravity...?

August 12 was an eventful day for Ontario stargazers with a partial solar eclipse, the peak of the Perseid meteor shower, and a pre-dawn six-planet alignment.

Then there was Project Anchor—a viral claim that, on August 12, the Earth would suddenly lose gravity causing people, cars and other objects to float for seven seconds before crashing back to the ground....?

That one had scientists around the world scratching their collective heads.

The eclipse, which began midday Aug. 12 and lasted 90 minutes, was barely noticeable in this region, since the moon covered only about eight percent of the sun. But sky watchers in St. John's NF were treated to a far more impressive 50 percent coverage, while viewers in Spain saw a total eclipse.

Shooting stars are far from rare, but the annual Perseid shower, remnants from the Swift-Tuttle comet, takes a lot of beating. Discovered in 1862, the comet travels a 133 year orbit around the sun leaving behind a massive trail of cosmic dust and ice fragments. Each August, the Earth passes through this debris field causing tiny particles to burn up in our atmosphere as the Perseid meteor shower.

Always impressive, the peak of this year's Perseids coincided with the 'new' phase of the moon. The resulting dark skies provided ideal conditions for seeing shooting stars. Observers who were away from city lights reported pre-dawn meteor counts of 50 to 100 an hour.

August 12 also saw an early morning six-planet alignment, known as a Large Planetary Parade, in which Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Uranus, Saturn, and Neptune in that order, appeared as an arc in the pre-dawn sky. Missing from the party was Venus which currently appears low in the South West evening sky shortly after sunset.

The next significant celestial event will be a lunar eclipse taking place at 10.33 pm on August 27 and visible across North America. Earth's shadow will cover about 96% of the moon's face, giving it a striking reddish-orange "blood moon" glow.

As to Project Anchor, according to NASA, the claim that Earth would suddenly lose gravity throwing folks into space for seven seconds was a hoax. The Agency says Earth's gravity can't simply turn off and on.



Partial eclipse Aug.12, as seen in southeast Ontario.

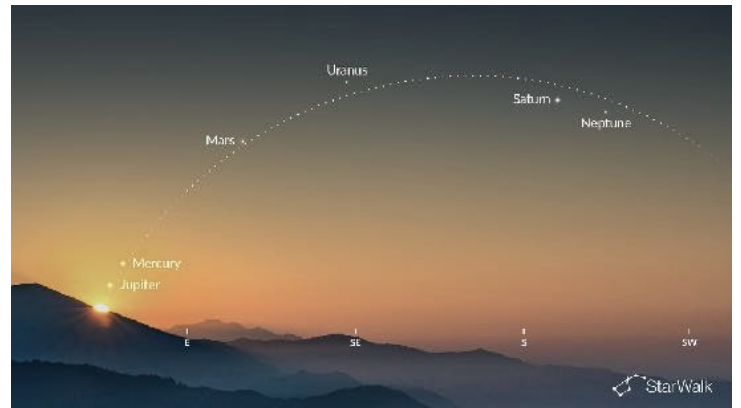


Diagram of the Large Six Planet Parade that took place in the pre dawn hours on August 12.

Drownings on the rise: the role of unlicensed boat charters

A sharp rise in rescue calls and drowning fatalities has authorities urging boaters and swimmers to take water safety seriously, and to wear their life-jacket.

Over the last decade, 249 Ontarians have died in marine incidents, the majority by capsizing or falling overboard. A third of the deaths were canoeists, kayakers and paddle boarders of whom only 17 percent were wearing a flotation device at the time of the incident

Responding to these figures, the OPP are urging all water users to wear a life jacket. "Stop tossing this proven life-saving device aside and wear it! Having it nearby is no help when you suddenly find yourself in the water."

That message is seconded by SABA. (Safety Awareness Boating Alliance) a Canadian not-for-profit group working to promote safe and legal boating in the commercial sector. Greg Swanson, SABA chief regulator officer believes these rising fatalities indicate a larger problem—namely the lack of public awareness around the need to be safe on the water.

He points to the rapid growth in commercial boat charters since the pandemic, especially on Lake Ontario around Toronto.

Social media platforms make it possible for owners of private pleasure-craft to market themselves online as commercial tour operators, without undergoing any Transport Canada inspection or certification.

Not only are these operators unlicensed and unregulated, Swanson says they are also illegal, posing a huge safety risk for the unsuspecting customer who charters one of these tours.

Privately-owned boats may be certified to carry up to 12 passengers, but SABA has found that many routinely take on 25 to 30 people, dangerously overloading the vessel. Owners also skip mandatory commercial safety inspections, lack adequate lifejackets, and carry no commercial liability insurance.

Even worse, many charter companies do not provide safety training to their staff, so If something happens when passengers are on board, the crew does not know what to do. So, Swanson says, "if you fall off their boat, you're on your own!"

This has resulted in several high profile marine-tragedies, some of which are still making their way through the Courts—tragedies that SABA believes should never have happened in the first place.

The problem, Swanson says, is that "there is no distinguishable element that would allow a passenger to distinguish who is a licensed safe operator, and who is not."

SABA's goal is to establish what the company calls "Canada's most trusted Illegal Charter Reporting System, empowering concerned citizens to play an active role in protecting maritime safety by voluntarily documenting and reporting suspicious activity."

This would include suspected non-compliant charter websites that advertise without proper certification, marine liability insurance or commercial licensing under the Canada Shipping Act 2001.

The confidential platform allows witnesses to record and submit important details like operator/vessel identification, incident particulars and supporting evidence: photographs of safety risks, screenshots of illegal advertisements or videos of unsafe operations.

Each report undergoes careful validation by SABA's maritime safety specialists before being shared with the appropriate agencies, thereby ensuring that concerns are directed to the organization best positioned to act.

In addition, SABA wants to implement mandatory ID. The Alliance says every vessel advertised for hire should be required to display a valid Commercial Registration number and Safety Compliance Certificate number, also known as the Blue Decal.

Issued by Transport Canada to small commercial passenger vessels, the Blue Decal indicates all federal safety regulations have been met.

SABA is also calling for enhanced policing protocols in the commercial sector to strengthen the process for detaining unsafe or noncompliant vessels. The Alliance maintains that jurisdictional overlaps between municipal/federal regulators and marine units across the Great Lakes are hindering enforcement procedures.

In a statement, Toronto Police, said they are aware of "growing public concern regarding the safety of Toronto's waterways," and confirm "there have been several marine-related deaths that have led to criminal charges, as well as charges under the Canada Shipping Act."

A statement by Transport Canada says during summer 2024, it "undertook inspection activities on alleged passenger operations, some of which resulted in enforcement actions, including vessel detentions."



Unlicensed Charter companies may not provide staff safety training. "If you fall off their boat, you're on your own."

Inter club Racing: Around Waupoos and Scotch Bonnet Islands

Photos by Mike Simic



Around Waupoos Island Race on August 1, 2026. Mike Simic, photo



Rick Jones and Gerard O'Brien aboard Storm Boy in the Waupoos race.



Elizabeth Zweck and Julie Hinton aboard IMOK at Waupoos Marina.



Non sailors watch the Waupoos race from the bow of a cruiser.



The post race party in the shed at Waupoos Marina.



IMOK crew: Elizabeth Zweck, Julie Hinton, Hong Li and Marina Kennedy.

Photos by Scott Brown



Dwight Koshman took first place in the Scotch Bonnet Race, Cruising Class. Photo by Scott Brown.



Marty Mathias (centre) with his crew, came first in the Scotch Bonnet White Sail division. Scott Brown photo.



Marty Mathias and Dwight Koshman with their first place pennants. Scott Brown, photo.

First Aid Kit essentials—don't buy, make it up yourself

BY DOROTHY FLETCHER

Be honest. Does the first aid kit on your boat consist of a tattered box of bandaids of indeterminate age?

Not good! Every boat should have basic first aid supplies on board. You can purchase kits in various places – some of them a bit pricey – or you can put together your own, customized to your needs.

To start: Yes, you do need adhesive bandages. Choose fabric based strips of varying sizes. Replace them as they get used. Note that over time the heat and humidity of a boat can affect the stickiness and therefore usefulness.

The most likely injuries on your boat are cuts and scrapes, so you should be sure to have supplies to deal with those. Antiseptic wipes are available in single packs and there are various brands of antibiotic ointments.

You should get several rolls of gauze in various widths and some gauze pads. Adhesive tape will be needed to secure the gauze bandages.

Add in a pair or two of disposable gloves, a small pair of scissors and some tweezers. A mylar survival blanket is also a good extra item.

Store your first aid supplies in a dry, easy to access location. Make sure everyone knows where it is.

As mentioned before, replace any items which are used, and check your kit at the beginning of each boating season to ensure everything you need is there, and in good condition.

If you do a lot of cruising to places far from population areas, you might want to consider taking a first aid course.

Perhaps a good winter project? Courses are available on-line, in person and as a hybrid of both formats.



Ready-made First Aid kits available to purchase at a price from the Canadian Red Cross.

Besides being helpful if disaster strikes on your boat, knowledge of first aid will make you more confident in helping those in need in other situations.

You will also learn, and practice using a defibrillator which can be a true life saver.

Many public buildings have these devices available – and, in case you haven't noticed, we have one available in the lobby at the Club.

A final bit of first aid advice is more of the preventative type. Pack sunscreen (and use it), wear a hat, and have a couple of extra on board for guests.

Also, good quality sunglasses protect your eyes, especially out on the water.

And hydrate, hydrate, hydrate!!!

Beer, while tasty, does not qualify in this case. Have lots of water on board, and drink it throughout the day.

Practice safety at all times, but knowing you have first aid supplies on hand means you will be prepared if you need to deal with problems.



The DIY version might look something like this.

BY MARY GAME

90 minutes trapped in the head

Once upon a time in the land of Avalon V, the quiet preparation of dinner was shattered by the rattling of the door handle in the head.

It was my worst fear. Ever since George and I bought the boat back in 1998, I always looked at the head door and wondered how you could get out if the handle mechanism broke. Now, it had happened.

This was not an easy problem to solve. The door to the head is solid wood with a one-piece frame which overlaps on the outside, creating a waterproof seal, if required.

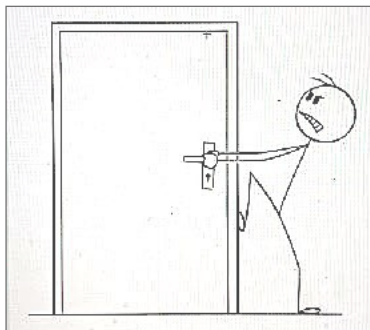
The handle and latch system are installed within the wood, inside a metal box. And it was this mechanism that, after 40 years of use, had finally given up the ghost. The poor soul locked in the head was my unfortunate crewman, Mike.

So what to do? I considered the options which basically boiled down to one, and this I presented to Mike – speaking as clearly as possible through the solid-wood door – he would have to take out the hinge-pins and remove the door.

Sounds easy?

Not so! The door hinges are small, the pins tiny and very hard to get at, and finding a tool small enough for that task took some considerable time.

My Plan B, should that not work, was to call a “*Pan Pan person locked in the head...*” I really did not want to make that call!



Meanwhile, inside the head, Mike removed the window screen to let Victoria, my granddaughter, pass him the tools he would need: hammer, screw drivers of various sizes, WD40, etc.

Then he went to work, hammering, prising, pushing, banging...

One and a half hours later, after a great deal of debate, much noise and some not so silent cussing, he was finally free, the ordeal over.

The other boaters in the anchorage must have wondered what in the world was going on!

You will be glad to know we switched the head latch system for the one from the V berth, and it's working again. In addition, there is now a hammer and screw driver under the sink in the head – hopefully, never to be used!



Dinghy sailing returns to the Yacht Club

This idyllic picture, left, shows Rachel with Mary's grandson Owen, out for a test sail in one of the newly refitted 420s recently acquired from CFB Kingston.

It's been a few years—if not decades—since the Club had a dinghy fleet, but dinghy racing was popular back in the day. In September 1974, the CAF Sailing Association held its Annual Regatta at Baker Island. 37 two-man teams, and up to twenty 420s participated in this two day event.

Reporting on the regatta, the now defunct Base newspaper, Contact, noted “Conditions were challenging with high winds developing after the second race, causing many boats to break down at a very rapid pace.”

Now, with the rehab complete, the Club has a dinghy fleet of three 420's, one CL11 and two Optimists. All are available for use by members – there is no extra charge.

So come out and bring the family! As Owen will tell you, dinghy sailing is a fun way to get the kids into boating!



CAF Sail Assn. Regatta, Contact, 10/10/74

High water + bubblers = less weeds

BY CHRISTINE FLETT

High water and cool wet weather have resulted in slower weed growth this summer. Water levels in Lake Ontario rose sharply through April-May, and remained high, peaking on Aug. 3 at 75.35m (247 ft) – just 35cm (13") below the historic high recorded in August 1947.

Not only was the water higher than normal it was also colder, and remained so all summer. The impact on aquatic plants has been significant. Curly Leaf Pondweed was much less aggressive than usual, and did not require a June treatment.

This allowed the Club to concentrate its efforts on Water Milfoil. A highly aggressive weed and a recurring mid summer problem since the mid '80s. Although not terrible this season, Milfoil grows fast and easily outcompetes other aquatic plants.

To prevent this, the Club sprayed both the main channel and dock areas with Reward herbicide on July 22, under a Ministry of Environment permit. Prior to this, the Club Supervisor had arranged for a Weeds BGone harvester to clear the east channel on July 21. Members are assured weed-free passage through the channel for the rest of the season.

Given the time of year, I would have expected to see Starry Stonewort in what the harvester removed, but on inspection, I could find only Water Milfoil with some native Eel Grass mixed through. In fact, Starry has been conspicuously absent, due partly to the cool wet summer – Starry thrives in sunshine.

The main reason for less Starry is that we now have year-round bubbling, not only around the docks but through the main channel where our six bubble curtains are adding vast amounts of oxygen to the water. In addition, we have installed turbines on the westernmost docks. These help water flow through the channel, and aerate the sediment, both of which contribute to reducing weed growth.

Nick Demarco of Weeds BGone, who supplied the harvester, put it this way:

"Whatever you're doing, it's working, so keep on doing it!"



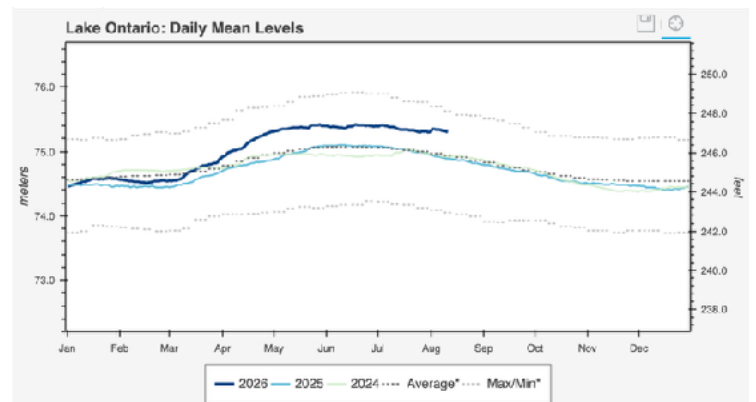
The pontoon boat heads out to treat the Main Channel, July 22, overseen by Club Safety Co-ordinator, Gary Lambert.



Spraying the docks are Eric Lawlor, Bob Forgues, Marty Mathias, Colin Baillie, Brian Coughlan and Perry Petrie.



No Starry this year! The weed pile consists entirely of Water Milfoil with some native Eel Grass mixed through.



Mexican Street Corn Salad

DOROTHY FLETCHER

One of the joys of full-on summer is fresh corn on the cob. Like many vegetables and fruits these days, imported versions can be found in supermarkets year-round, but nothing – and I mean *nothing* – tastes as good as local fresh corn.

Living where we do, it's quite easy to find a market or road-side vendor selling corn and other early harvest vegetables. Local supermarkets often sell Ontario corn, which is not terrible but may have been travelling for some time or held in storage. Again, the fresher the better.

Know also that most of the vast fields of corn you see in rural areas is not being grown for our consumption, but for animal feed and other such diverse uses as ethanol fuel, grain alcohol, corn starch and syrup. The corn we love is usually referred to as sweet corn, and is a good source of fibre, Vitamin C, folate, niacin and thiamin.

Corn should be cooked and eaten promptly as the sugars will start to turn to starch. The super-sweet varieties sold now retain their sweetness longer but don't wait to enjoy your corn. Many people overcook corn – if boiling you need only a few minutes. You can barbecue corn either still in its husk (soak in cold water first) or peeled.

And here's a crazy but delicious idea – eat corn raw. I had to be talked into it, but discovered an unforgettably delicious taste. Much later I was talking to a market garden farmer and she told me that every morning she picks and eats an ear of corn, right in the field to determine ripeness. So give it a try!

Corn was first cultivated in Mexico some 9000 years ago. Corn is still popular in that country and forms one part of the so-called "Three Sisters" consisting of corn, squash and beans. Popular as street food in Mexico, corn on a stick can be enjoyed slathered in butter and rolled in cheese and chili powder.

You don't need to travel to Mexico to enjoy those tastes. This recipe for a corn salad will be a delicious addition to any meal. Buen provecho – enjoy!



INGREDIENTS

2 cobs fresh corn (or 2 cups kernels)
 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
 3 tablespoons sour cream
 1/4 teaspoon chipotle powder (or chilli powder)
 1 teaspoon lime juice
 1/4 cup finely diced red onion
 1/2 jalapeño, seeds and ribs removed, chopped finely (optional)
 1/2 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
 2 tablespoons fresh Parsley (or cilantro) chopped
 1 - 2 tablespoons crumbled feta cheese

Cook or grill the corn until done.

Allow to cool, then cut off kernels.

Make the dressing by mixing together mayonnaise, sour cream, chipotle powder and lime juice.

Mix the dressing into the corn then stir in the onion, jalapeño, beans and parsley.

Top with crumbled feta.

Can be served warm, room temperature or cold.

Serves 5 - 6 as a side dish.