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UPPER BAY Boating

August 2017

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Upper Bay Boating

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On the Cover: Wish-A-Fish 2016. Make -A- Wish Family Day is on
Sept ember 16 Sandy Point Park f photo by Tim Campbell

photo by Michell Sumrall

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Welcome to the August Issue

Boy, time flies! I can't believe it; another season is half over folks. Just another month or so of the hot weather; then it's time for some of the best boating weather of the year. Fall is right around the corner.

As I get older, time just fly's by and I'm sure that is the same for most of you. Oh yea- unless you can't remember what happened yesterday like me. Oh what a joy it is getting to 60 and running into some old geezer and realizing you went to high school with them!

In the last issue your assignment was to invite some younger folks to go with you on your next boating adventure, or fishing trip. For the boating lifestyle to continue as we know and love it, we need some younger folks to catch the bug, just as many of you did growing up. When you do take someone out on the boat, how about taking a few shots of the fun your guests

are having and send the photos in to me. Contributions of any photos including your pets on the water are always welcome. Send them to: dave@upperbayboating.com



We also welcome story ideas, event listings, and your tech questions if you have a problem with your boat. If it happens on the Upper Bay, Delaware River, or Susquehanna River, let us know about it. After all, this magazine is all about your favorite part of the bay and nearby bodies of water. We can't do it without your support. And that includes supporting the advertisers whom support this FREE magazine

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Rock Hall

By Wendy Gilbert
Features Editor

Rock Hall was one of my old friend Bob Liddell's favorite boating destinations. During his years as a sales representative for both The Mariner and The Nor'Easter, he loved taking his boat Miss L'Attitude from Bay Boat Works to Rock Hall.

The well-protected harbor and excellent fishing were as big a draw as the food and entertainment. They still are.

While Bob and I visited his favorite haunts, I took careful mental stock of what my husband and I would do someday. Bob isn't with us any longer, but every time I get near Rock Hall, I can't help but remember him and how much he relished visiting this waterfront town.

And my "Rock Hall MD Someday" arrived last month, and despite some very choppy water, Rich and I had a lovely, if short, stay.

Our first night at the Bay Breeze Inn was ushered in by a terrific thunderstorm. A bit more than a gully-washer, but not quite reminiscent of a hurricane.

A small craft advisory was in effect the entire time we were there and we heeded it. Hardier souls than us, struck out every morning to go fishing on a charter boat. We slept in and in between excellent meals, went to visit places on my old Rock Hall bucket list.

We had crabs at Waterman's, rockfish at the Harbor Shack, ice cream at the new shops (Rock Hall Village) and wine at the MainStay. Can't recommend these places high enough. This Cecil County girl really appreciated being able to taste Kilby Cream ice cream so far from home! Cody Leavel and Joe Holt's jazz music was the perfect end to a perfect day.

On day two we decided to check out the Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge. If you can't go boating, you might as well go birding!

The varied habitats on Eastern Neck NWR, including brackish tidal marsh, forest, cropland, grassland, and open water impoundments, provide a home for a variety of wildlife species.

Over 240 species of birds, and a variety of mammals, amphibians and reptiles inhabit the island.

I didn't get a photo, but we spied a diamond back terrapin crossing the road just before the bridge. Yes, we brake for turtles!

Between October and March, thousands of migratory waterfowl winter in the Chesapeake Bay. Refuge staff have documented peaks of more than 50,000 waterfowl of 33 different species on and near the refuge. The most common species include Canada geese, tundra swans, lesser scaup, and mallards. Other waterfowl species often found on the refuge include American black ducks, canvasbacks, buffleheads, northern pintails, green and blue-winged teal, American wigeons, ruddy ducks, long-tailed ducks and other sea ducks.

Wendy Gilbert



Young eagles and great horned owls are learning to fly in June. Blue birds fledge in July. In August, osprey may start their migration south while blue-winged teal, the earliest waterfowl migrants, begin to arrive from northern breeding grounds.

The blue birds were so abundant, we were entranced. It was if we had found the other end of the rainbow. There are plenty of overlooks and short walking trails to enjoy on all sides of the island. The volunteers at the visitor's center are wonderful and guides are plentiful. Don't forget your binoculars, camera, bug spray and sunscreen though – mosquitoes, chiggers and

ticks are as plentiful as the wildlife.

One of my favorite walks was through the butterfly garden. I didn't see many butterflies, but there were plenty of bees!

Next time a bit of chop puts a crimp in your Rock Hall boating plans, don't despair. There's plenty of fun to be had if you just look around.

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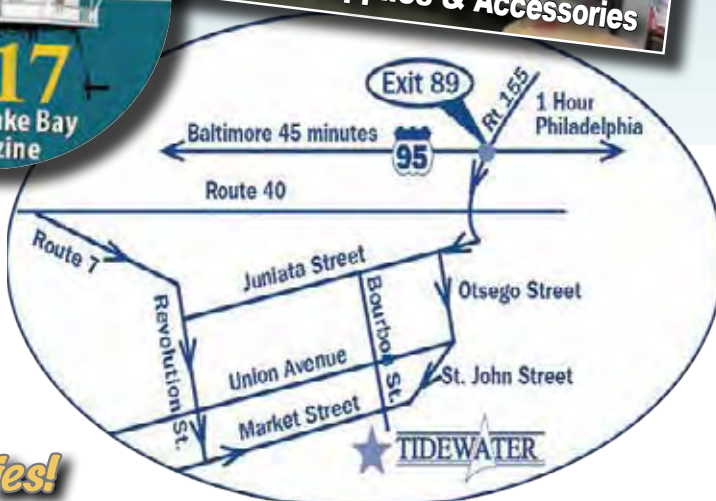
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Continuing the Cleanup of our Waterways Leading to the Chesapeake Bay

The Back River Restoration Committee, Inc. has 4 hard working interns this summer. The four Environmental students go out in the sweltering heat each day to cleanup the trash in Back River and other tributaries that lead to the Chesapeake Bay. These students are seeing first hand the problems with littering and dumping in our communities and the effect it has on our waterways and wildlife. The crew goes out by boat and land to pick up stray tires, bottles, metal, wood and even refrigerators. In just two days, they picked up 45 tires and almost 2 tons of trash.

The crew has also worked with volunteers joining in cleanups, storm drain markings, trees and on fundraising events.

The crew helped out with the fundraiser and one even played in the event. Being part of planning, working and participating with the event gave them a better understanding of what a Non-profit 501c3 has to do to raise funds and awareness for the cause. The Students include Rob Carrigan from Goucher, Evan Janis from Towson University, Lorenzo Mack-Johnson from CCBC and Alex Jones from Hereford High.



The summer crew was able to see first hand how much support is behind them and BRRC to cleanup the Chesapeake Bay at the 6th Annual Golf Tournament in June. The event exploded this year with 130 golfers and 67 sponsors, including Brewer's Landing donating all of the beer for the event.





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August 2017

Chesapeake Bay Artificial Reef Projects

by Tim Campbell

Artificial reefs add marine life to the Chesapeake Bay and provide habitat for fish and oysters. Efforts to improve the water quality, enhance bio-diversity, increase fish populations and provide fishing opportunities with artificial reefs has been going on for many years. The Maryland Department of Natural Resource's first artificial reef was permitted in 1966. Today MD DNR manages 21 artificial reef sites from Poole's Island to Tangier Sound under MARI, the Maryland Artificial Reef Initiative. Artificial reef material includes rubble, old road barriers, and concrete reef balls. The reef sites are in depths of 15 to 30 feet and range in size from less than one acre to over 2500 acres. Upper bay reef projects include the Memorial Stadium reef, Gale's Lumps and Love Point. Plans to further enhance these three sites are in the works. Meanwhile, on June 21, 2017, volunteers from the Coastal Conservation Association of Maryland and CCA Northern Virginia helped to add 140 reef balls to the Tilghman Island reef site. Half of the reef balls were set with oyster spat. CCA MD members Alan Feikin, Chuck Thompson, John Bonanno, Keith Fraser and Travis Long volunteered on site in their boats to help on the day of the reef ball drop. This project started last year with 72 reef balls. The Tilghman Island site now has 212 reef balls. It is one of the largest artificial reefs in the bay.

Many businesses, conservation groups, students and volunteers take part in the ongoing reef ball project including Lehigh Heidelberg Cement Group and Vulcan Materials Company. Funding support from the Building Conservation Trust, CCA's National Habitat Program, is vital to the success of the projects. Sean Stone, Executive Director of BCT said, "I'm passionate about fishing and marine habitat, and with the natural partnership between CCA and BCT, we are making a real impact. BCT is very proud of the work CCA is doing in the Chesapeake Bay, and is looking forward to continuing our great work together."

Students from the Anne Arundel Center for Applied Technology North, Carroll County Public Schools, the Carroll County Career and Tech Center as well as the James Madison High School in Vienna, Virginia constructed the reef balls as part of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program. Once the concrete in the reef balls is cured they are taken to a Chesapeake Bay Foundation facility in Shady Side, Maryland known as the Maryland Oyster Restoration Center. It is the central location for CBF's oyster restoration projects in Maryland. There, some of the hollow reef



balls are placed in one of three, 3000-gallon tanks where tiny oysters called spat are grown on them. When the oyster spat is set on the reef balls, they are ready to be placed on the site. The 60' oyster restoration boat named "Patricia Campbell" ships the reef balls to the site and carefully places them using a crane. It is estimated that 2000 baby oysters are living on each reef ball. Many will not survive, but a lot will.

The reef is being monitored by Dr. Keith Johnson with Stevenson University School of Science and with help from Brad King, owner of Kent Island Scuba Company.

It is important to know that the bay is overloaded with nutrients. Oysters help filter out algae, nutrients and other pollutants. The bay's oyster population is at less than 2% of their historic population. Therefore, it's easy to see why artificial reefs are essential to the betterment of the Chesapeake Bay. For images of the reefs go to <http://ccamdhabitat.com/video/> and for Chesapeake Bay artificial reef locations go to <http://dnr.maryland.gov/>

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Medical Kits for Boats

By Captain Mark Galasso

Tuna the Tide Charter Service
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The last time I took a CPR refresher for my Captain's license I spent a day in Ocean City taking a class called CPR and First Aid for boaters. It was offered through the United States Sail and Power Squadron District 5. The class was fascinating. I have been working on the water all my life and the class still made me think long and hard about how much I really am prepared for an emergency at sea. A few weeks after the class an incident that happened on another charter boat farther down the Bay really got me thinking. And if that wasn't enough two events on my own boat made me think even harder.

The two major ideas that came across from the class was first, professional medical attention is never close at hand. If your sixty miles off the beach it may be hours before anyone can help you instead of minutes. And second CPR is a way of maintaining a person's ability to be saved by keeping the lungs and heart active until the person can be jolted back to life. And briefly on the CPR side I'll just say this. If you haven't taken a CPR class do it now! And if your boat spends a lot of time offshore get an AED aboard and learn how to use it.

Our purpose here is to look at the first aid portion of the equation. Preparation improves confidence and confidence keeps one from panicking. And panic always ends in disaster. So let's get prepared. First off everyone should know basic first aid. Boaters should know the signs to look for if someone is in distress. Cuts and wounds are obvious. Heat exhaustion and allergies not so much. On my boat I always try and ask if anyone has any medical conditions I should know about like being diabetic or food allergies. One of the events that happened on my boat was a woman stung by a bee. It's a good thing she had an epi pen in her purse because what are the chances of that happening in the middle of the Bay.

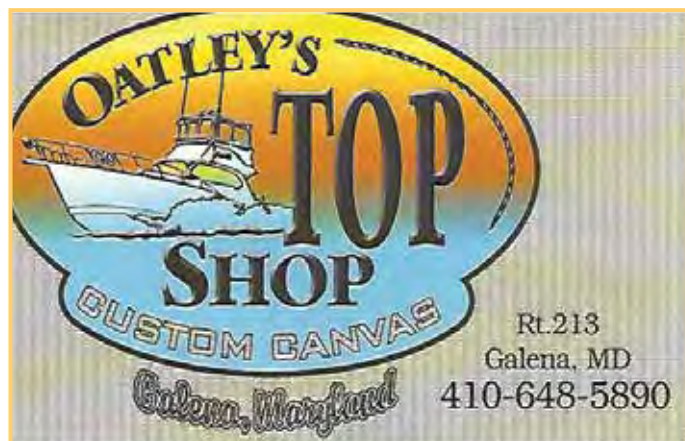
Another event that happens all too often is the stress of operating a boat in the hot sun can easily lead someone with a weak heart to have a mild heart attack. It happened to a Captain I know and it was his good fortune his charter that day was a doctor who recognized the signs and just happened to have a bottle of Aspirin on hand.

Our first line of defense as boat operators is education. It's readily available if you want it. The second is being prepared with a fully stocked medical kit. Mine is a certified kit I pulled out of a restaurant. It is well supplied but I have modified

it somewhat knowing that help can arrive quickly in a restaurant. Not so fast on a charter boat.

The kit I have was well stocked for cuts and abrasions. It had antibiotic creams and ointments as well as numerous bandages. It had scissors to cut bandages and even had a long rubber strip that could be used as a tourniquet if I had to stop a major blood loss. It didn't have an epi pen. It also didn't have aspirin. I also added hydrogen peroxide in case I had to clean cuts and wounds. I also added a lighter in case I needed to sterilize something. I also added a face shield in case I had to perform rescue breathing. I also added a pair of cutters that could cut a hook in half in case someone was unfortunate enough to get hooked. I also added a few razor blades and sunscreen to the mix.

Most of the local Marine stores carry medical kits. And they are very good. Just be sure they have what you need. Most of them don't carry things that tend to have a limited shelf life like aspirin and sunscreen. And you should check your kit often. My restaurant kit was not made for a marine environment. Moisture can ruin things if your not careful. If you have a small open boat your kit is more susceptible. Inspect it often and keep it up to date. You never know when you'll need it!





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MSSA Essex/Middle River Chapter is having their Kids Fishing Day

at Wilson Point Park on **August 5**, 2017. 8:30 am to noon. Pre-registration is required (but they won't turn any kids away). Prizes for biggest fish and free hot dogs.

CCA MD - Baltimore Chapter Kids

Catch Day August 5 at Canton Waterfront Park starting at 9am. Free and open to the public. No registration required.

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Chester County Bass Masters

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Upper Eastern Shore Anglers

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Back River Restoration Committee

Rockfish Tournament Sept 9 held at Weavers Marine 730 Riverside Ave. Essex, Md. Larry 443-600-0648 or savethebackriver@gmail.com

Wish A FishFamily Day **Sept 16**

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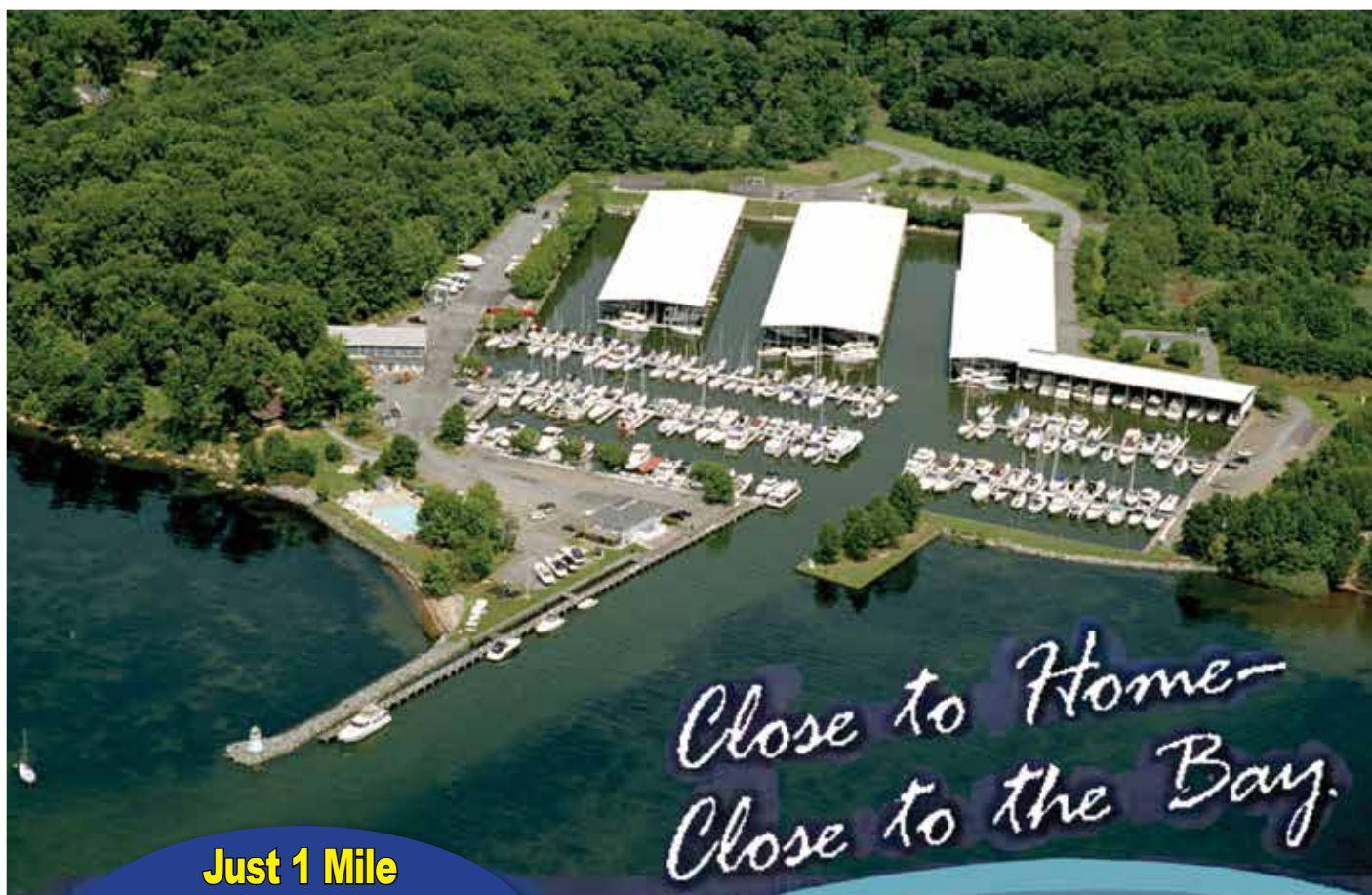
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Upper Bay Museum Lures Visitors

Most boaters reserve visiting places like maritime museums for the off-season. When the chill of winter creeps in and there's not much else to do that feels even remotely connected to boating – that's when we visit museums, peruse merchandise on websites and generally long for something, anything that smells at least a little fishy.

The folks at North East's Upper Bay Museum are seeing a nice uptick in visitors this season however and they couldn't be happier.

Last week I was able to chat with a few guys connected to the museum and while I was there, I noted that they were absolutely right – folks kept popping in for a looksee. This museum is well tended and like a good movie, it's worth taking a look at now and again, because you will always notice something new.

The big idea is of course to preserve the lifestyle of the commercial waterman and hunter of the Upper Chesapeake Bay. Rich and Lori Bouchelle are one of the museum's power couples. Rich, president, longtime volunteers Jim Cannon and Frank Miller are always happy to answer questions or show a visitor around. "What we hear the most is 'I've never been down here' or 'This is the first time I've been here when you've been open'," recalled Bouchelle.



By Wendy Gilbert
Features Editor



The museum is open between noon and 4 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Free admission.

"Last year were really busy. Because of the Pokémon craze, people were here all hours of the day and night," Bouchelle noted.

A Pokémon gym is located right in front of the museum and although not as popular as last year, is still a draw for visitors to the park. Families spend some time on the playground, walking trails or picnicking at the pavilions. Sooner or later a few people will wander over when the "Open" flag is flying.

Cannon noted that they have set two attendance records this year. They had 186 guests on Memorial Day and 213 on July 3rd. The town of North East puts on a major "Salute to Veterans" show every year, complete with entertainment, food, vendors and a very popular fireworks show. Those are big numbers for a 4-hour shift.

"Our goal is to be a destination," Cannon said, noting that the community park is being utilized more often. It's great that park visitors are popping into the museum, but board members and volunteers would like to see more purposeful and deliberate visitors.

To that end a Facebook page and

Upper Bay Museum



Rich Bouchelle, Frank Muller and Jim Cannon are happy to show visitors around the Upper Bay Maritime Museum.

website are active. There's a new sign out on Route 40 too. Guests are not required to pay an admission, but the guys note that most are very generous with their donations. Those funds are used to rebuild, operate and improve the museum and its artifacts. As are funds raised at the gift shop, the Upper Bay Decoy Show and an annual Spring Dinner Benefit and Auction.

"Sometimes people will stick their heads in (the door) and ask if we have anything new and yes, we add something new every year," Bouchelle said, indicating the gil net and other fishing devices on display right behind him. There was an impressive 22-ft fishing skiff is right behind it. It was built 115 years ago by Sam Barns. It was also owned by Jack Futto, who donated it to the museum. The skiff was one of many items buried at the boat building school next door. Some of the members who worked on the display, worked the boat.

In addition to new artifacts and displays, many of the current displays feature more signs and labels. "They tell you more about a what it is. Not just a name, but how it was used," Bouchelle added "Three years ago, we had 20-25 University of Delaware Students come here for two weeks. They were all Museum Studies majors



The Museum is located in the North East Community Park. Open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. Open Memorial Day Through Labor Day only Free Admission.

and they cleaned and cataloged everything," Bouchelle noted. Students worked on the old-time decoy shop, boat building tools, commercial fishing equipment and local Native American artifacts. Popular displays include those as well as the fishing shanty, sink box and punt gun. Muller says that Babe Ruth's shot gun is another favorite as are the decoys and ship models.

The museum building itself is of interest as well. Most visitors don't know that they are in a fish house. The H.L. Harvey Fish House to be specific. It was part of the creation of the community park back in 1976. A second building was added in 1982 and in 2012 became the Chesapeake Wooden Boat Builders School.

For additional information on the museum, events and membership: www.facebook.com/upperbaymuseum
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BUZZARD BLITZ!!!

By Montana Grant

Now don't get me wrong, I love nature and most of God's creatures. Buzzards, or Turkey Vultures, may be my new least favorite critter. Especially at the Susquehanna State Park below Conowingo Dam. This location is a wonderful access for the public to boat, hike, fish, and watch the birds, eagles, and I guess the filthy Buzzards!

I took a couple of young fishermen out for a fishing adventure. Years ago, I had done the same trip many times. The trip required a 1 ½ mile walk to an area along the Susquehanna River known as the "Fish Traps". The local Indian tribes had moved rocks to direct fish into their fish weirs. The evidence remains, and the fishing is still great. How cool is fishing for striped bass in fresh water around ancient fish traps!

When we arrived, it was dark, and we hiked down the trail. I had parked in a marked, paved parking spot. Fishing was fun and everyone caught stripers, white perch and small-mouth bass. I saw an old fisherman upstream and started up a conversation. Like me, many years ago, he rode a bike to the spot but came up river, not down. The distance was twice as far. He said that a few weeks earlier, he had parked where we parked, and that the buzzards ate his windshield wipers, plastic trim and trashed his truck!

Oh well. We were committed. The river rises when the dam runs water to make electricity. At 10 a.m. we hiked back to my shiny, new, beautiful truck. I was curious to see if the "Old Timer" was correct.

When I first saw my once beautiful truck, there were dozens of buzzards hanging on my ladder rack, roof, and hood. Wings were spread and flapping. It looked like they were trying to fly away with my F-150. When they couldn't lift it, they did their worst. Feathers, crap, vomit, and filth were everywhere. We flushed the flock away and I noticed that the trim around my windshield had been eaten. Their little beaks meticulously nipped it away! In a few short hours, they had wasted my truck!

Across the parking lot were two more buzzards sitting along a fence next to a sign that said, "Buzzards may damage your vehicle". Talk about too little too late! The State Park covered their liability but has done nothing more. I am sure that I am not



the only victim of a Buzzard Blitz! How much fiscal damage has been done? How many people, pets, and children have been sickened? How many people now avoid this wonderful public park because of Buzzards?

If these road kill eating birds are such a problem, at least put up several signs, and maybe some bigger signs. The parking lot is paved, mowed, lined, and managed for public access, not Buzzard Blitzes! Did any of the State Park Staff witness the event as they patrolled the park? This parking area is at the main gate to the park. Does the State feel that their small sign is enough to address the problem? How can boaters leave their rigs near the boat ramp safely?

More warning and solutions are needed. Not only is there a vandalism issue, there is also a huge health issue. Perhaps a little population management or control are needed. I will gladly help!
CRAP!!!!

Montana Grant

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



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Sunset on the Chesapeake

by Dick Greenwood

A little over 12 years ago I bought my boat and found a marina to cruise in and out of. About the same time, I wrote to Ira Black, the publisher of *Nor'easter Magazine*, and told him that I loved his magazine but it needed a regular column that was written from the point of view of someone brand-new to boating. I volunteered to be that neophyte.

Within an hour-and-a-half of sending my email, Ira replied. In his inimitable style—Ira is a master at cutting to the chase—he said, “Show me 1500 words and we’ll talk.” Not to be outdone and being blessed with the ability to write quickly, within two hours I submitted a 1500 word column. Ira didn’t respond, but my column appeared in the next issue of the magazine and a check arrived in my mailbox. I was off and writing.

Until its demise several years later—I think it was in 2009—I had the privilege of being a fixture at *Nor'easter*. I loved it. Writing for boating magazines gives you what writers and photographers want most: access. Most of my columns are written about things that happen to me or interest me, but others stem from ideas the publisher has. Regardless of who dreams up the idea behind the article, each piece carries the potential for discovery and adventure.

Writing for Ira, I got to travel on tugboats, Coast Guard cutters, a Liberty Ship, and a manufacturer’s trawler in the Northwest. I got to sit on the starting line of the Volvo Ocean Race. I got to meet really interesting people. Some of those people have become friends. Woody Loller, Head Wahtoosh at Haven Harbour Marina, is a good example. Woody was so good at ignoring comments like, “Woody, at Haven Harbour, is offering a special, ‘Rent a slip for double the price and get the water for free’ type jibe that I once wrote that I wasn’t sure he could read. Truth be told, and I hate to do that, Woody is an outstanding guy and he runs a premier operation. (Please don’t ever tell him I said that.)

While writing for *Nor'easter* I got to know and enjoy the company of Wendy Gilbert, the Features Editor for this magazine, and I had the opportunity to work with and value the friendship of Paul Esterle, *Nor'easter*’s editor, a guy whose talent and insight are immeasurable. I still talk with Paul several times a month. And of course, there’s Tom Sassaman, to whom I frequently turned for insights into the ups and downs of the boating industry. Tom always had an interesting slant on things and was always willing to brainstorm the industry so I could share information with my readers.

Speaking of “my readers,” I don’t think I had a reader who was more loyal and consistently helpful than Millie Perry. Millie and her husband, Jeff, have supplied me with ideas for columns—I particularly like the fact that their ideas have not included “quit writing”—and even gave me a ride once in order to prove that there is enough water in the upper North East River to float an aluminum boat. They’re great people, and I treasure their friendship.

It isn’t always easy to be the friend of a smart-ass writer, just ask Chuck Pellegrini. Chuck, or the “Italian Scallion” as I often think of him, is probably the most knowledgeable boater I know, and he’s been a constant source of information, for which I’ve paid him back with a

string of revelations about his character and skill. One or two of those revelations have approached the truth. It was Chuck who introduced me to Dick Butler, who gave me one of the finest moments of my writing career when he took me for a cruise to Kent Narrows and got a ticket for not having enough PFDs for the number of passengers he was carrying. The photograph I took at the moment the police officer was writing the ticket remains one of my all-time favorite photographs. Dick has since retired from boating; I suspect he got sticker shock from the cost of PFDs. I miss him.

It was also Chuck Pellegrini who introduced me to Ron Butler. Ron makes his living saving boaters from the woes of torn, missing, or poorly designed canvas. He redid the canvas on my Chaparral, and I was

never happier with a job. Interestingly, Chuck has a theory that Ron is the model for Ira Black’s Juke the Waterman; Ron drinks longnecks, tells lots of stories, and knows the ins and outs of the Bay better than just about anyone I know. I’ve never mentioned Chuck’s theory to Ira—I try to forget everything Chuck tells me—but I have to admit it’s an interesting one.

When Ira sold *Nor'easter* I wrote for Mid Atlantic Boating during its short life, then for Chesapeake 360, which was so short-lived I can barely remember what I wrote about. I did find one column in which I wrote about August on the Bay, saying, “the arrival of the eighth month brings out the muse of melancholy, and boaters begin mentally and

emotionally to pack their boatlongings and look toward winter.” Had one of my students ever used the word “boatlongings” I’d have drummed him out of the class. Oh well...

After that I wrote for *Boater’s World*, a magazine that comes out of Long Island and for which I felt totally out of water. Paul Esterle set me up with the gig, and when the publisher suggested I recycle some of my *Nor'easter* articles, Paul told me he wasn’t surprised. I was surprised. I quit after a few months of trying to find something “Long Islandish” to talk about. It’s a nice magazine and the people were great, but I’m a Chesapeake Bay guy. It wasn’t a good fit.

Fast-forward to 2015 and the introduction of Upper Bay Boating. It’s been nice to get back to writing about the Bay for a guy, Dave Bielecki, I like and respect. But nice doesn’t hold my attention when it comes time for a deadline or an assignment. I still enjoy the writing part, but the story-hunting part has lost its charm. I’m not a kid any more, and more and more I’m sticking with my mantra that “It’s got to be fun.” I’m not having enough fun.

So I’ve made a selfish decision. This is the last column I’m ever going to write. Dave, you’re great. Millie and Jeff, you’re the best. Wendy, it’s been really nice. Chuck and Woody... Uh, Chuck and Woody, I know you’re smiling. Be well everyone. As I’ve always said, “If you’ve enjoyed reading my columns half as much as I’ve enjoyed writing them, then I’ve been getting twice as much pleasure as you have; and that works for me.” Boat safely and be well.





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Ask a Marine Technician

By Kevin Ladenheim
Mallard Marine Services

Tip of the Month: A few years ago I noticed a new tool on the market, a locking ten inch adjustable wrench from Stanley. It's a common adjustable wrench combined with the locking mechanism from locking pliers.

It's sometimes just really useful to have smooth locking jaws but my favorite use is working alone with through bolts on a bulkhead, normally a two person job. The locking adjustable wrench is long enough that if you lock it on a bolt head or nut, there is a good chance it will jam against something as it starts to rotate, if not, you can use a fender washer and screw the hanghole to the bulkhead or put on two wrenches at once if there are multiple fasteners in the area and wire or clamp the handles together.

They are pretty cheap so you can have a few and not have to climb in and out of hard to reach spots as often to complete your job. There are three versions on the market that I can find: Stanley 85-610 (~\$16 at Home Depot, \$12 at Wal-Mart), Crescent ACL10VS (~\$25 at Home Depot) and Craftsman 25825 (~\$18 at Sears).

Q. What causes my bilge pump to cycle constantly and what can I do to fix it?

A. I'll assume that you have a submersible pump with a separate float switch and the behavior you are seeing is that the pump runs until the float switch drops to the off position. But once the pump stops, the backflow from the bilge discharge hose causes the float switch to rise again and the pump turns on.

If your boat was on the hard, some portion of the bilge hose run may be uphill and some portion may be downhill to the through hull. Being in the water is dynamic and so the line between uphill vs downhill portions of hose are changing a little which could contribute to the behavior not always being the same. When the pump shuts off, whatever volume of water that is currently downhill runs back into the bilge.

The level of bilge water that turns the switch on minus the level that turns the switch off defines the volume of water needed to turn the pump on. If the volume of water that backflows from the downhill portion of the bilge hose is just a bit bigger than volume of water needed to trigger the switch, the pump will cycle endlessly.

Small changes like a new pump, new switch or slightly different mounting height or location can cause the problem. A small change like shimming the base of the float switch to tilt it might help. The easy fix is to add a check valve but this could create a new problem because the valve can jam. A check valve in this application is allowed by the ABYC standards. If you want to use a check valve, you should at least consider adding a completely independent second pump and discharge hose without a check valve, a little higher than your primary pump. This is the factory setup on many boats.

Another possible fix is to replace the float switch with a model that has greater vertical travel, which would increase the volume of water needed to turn the pump on.

One long travel switch is the Ultra Safety Systems Ultra Bilge Pumpswitch (Senior is ~\$180, Junior is ~\$150). Another long travel switch is the Aqualarm SS-209 Smart Bilge Pump Switch. If you find that manually holding up your float switch until you pump dry makes your set up behave, this pump will do that for you automatically. It runs the pump for fifteen seconds past the switch turning off every time it triggers.

It is also possible to have malfunctioning parts. Some pumps have water level detection that doesn't use any moving parts. There are similar electronic sensors that can be wired to a plain pump. If the detection doesn't work right I would expect the pump to pump endlessly or not pump at all. Which is different from the behavior discussed above.



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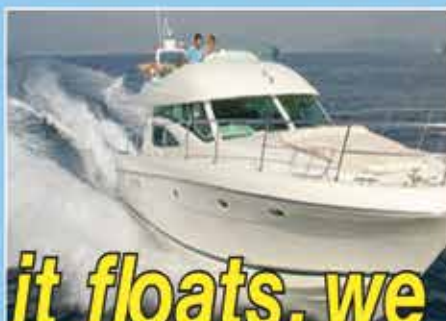
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Tips for choosing Your Next Boat

By James Bedell

Choosing a boat can be tough, especially on a budget. Knowing what you are looking for is the key to finding the right boat at the right price. The first step is understanding how you will be using your boat. This covers everything from how many passengers you want to carry, how far you plan to travel, to what systems you will need. Once you know how you want to use your boat, you'll be surprised at how easy it is to find the boat that's right for you. Here are some tips to help you out.

Start by listing what activities you will use your boat for; this will help you to determine what kind of boat you need. Just want to do some lazy day fishing? An aluminum open boat is a great choice. Looking to spend a few days anchored in a secluded cove? Look for a cabin cruiser or down east style for weekend getaways. Think about the key components of a day on the water for you and what amenities or design features you may need to meet all of your boating goals. Once you know how you plan to use your boat you can start deciding on what systems and equipment you'll need. I used to show boats for a broker and I would always tell folks to think about what makes a day on the water special for them- do you need a thumping stereo system? Or maybe a baitwell is a must? How about air conditioning? Do you need storage for swim toys, or deck space for coolers? Every boat has its own strengths and weaknesses so be sure to take note of them when you start shopping. Even that open fishing boat can have an array of options from casting decks, to biminis, to a side or center console.

If you have a chance to use other boats or spend some time on a friend's boat, pay attention to things you like or don't like about each design. I am currently boat shopping for a larger boat that my wife and I can use to take trips around the bay. From our boating experiences we have decided we do NOT want a flybridge, we need to have a cabin high enough to see the water from the salon table, and we need a shallow draft to hit our favorite coves. Now that we know what features are important we can start looking around and making a list of models that have what we need. From there, we will narrow it down by looking at the smaller details of boats that fit those parameters. With our list of features in mind we can easily narrow down our choices. For big cabin windows, houseboats or down east styles are a great choice. A houseboat also has a very shallow draft so that's another check on the list. I have had plenty of experience with houseboats and know that they catch the wind better than any sail and if you are not experienced they can be tricky to handle in windy conditions. Similarly, pontoon boats are great family day boats, but even the slightest chop can make maneuvering very difficult. Keep these considerations in mind when shopping. Also understand that everyone who has ever owned a boat has had to learn to use it. Whether you have an outboard, Inboard/Outboard, or inboard, single or duals, it will take some getting used to before you are docking like a pro. Don't



shy away from your dream boat because it has dual inboards and you've only run a single I/O. Just take a weekend to practice various maneuvers like docking, anchoring, and man-overboard retrieval.

If you are a novice boater or new to the hobby altogether it can be tough to decide what you need or to know how different boats will perform. Boat shows and dealer events are a great way to explore multiple boat styles and configurations to hone in on what you really want in your boat. There are also a ton of resources at most boat shows from docking courses to boat safety demonstrations and more to get you on the water with confidence. As you tour the boats, be sure to ask dealer staff any and every question you have. They know their products and can be invaluable in determining the key strengths and weaknesses of a boat. Of course, once you've decided, boat shows are a great time to buy; often times you'll get great pricing, dealer incentives, and after sales support. If you buy used through a broker, be sure to get a survey so you know what you are getting into. If you are like me and are in a position that requires you to find your next boat on Craigslist, Ebay, or BoatAngel; you can still get everything you want in a boat. The same consideration should be put into choosing the right style boat. If you are buying a boat that needs work, think of it like a starter house. It doesn't have to be just right; it just has to be a good frame. You can add the amenities you want as you fix it up and in the end you'll have a boat tailored to suit your family's boating needs. Next time we will cover outfitting your boat and give you some ideas to make your boat a bespoke Chesapeake retreat.

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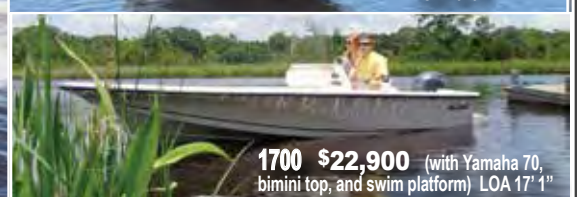
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typically be washed into the creek during rainstorms. Planted with a variety of wildflowers and shrubs native to Maryland, the practice will provide valuable wildlife habitat for pollinators and a beautiful view from the water.

The Clear Creeks Project is a grant-funded initiative that educates local homeowners and businesses on ways to reduce storm water runoff. Our project area includes Perry Hall, White Marsh, Nottingham, Middle River, Holly Neck, Bowley's Quarters, and Wilson Point. Through our cost-share program, participants from these communities are eligible to receive 50-80% discounts on rain barrels and Bay-friendly garden installations.

Visit www.clearcreeks.org to learn more about the Clear Creeks Project.

To find out if you qualify for our cost-share opportunities, contact Amy Young, Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator, at ayoung@gunpowdervc.org or (410) 404-4748.



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On the Waterfront

with George Waters

photo by Donna Bedell

My father's balled socks, and other things I miss

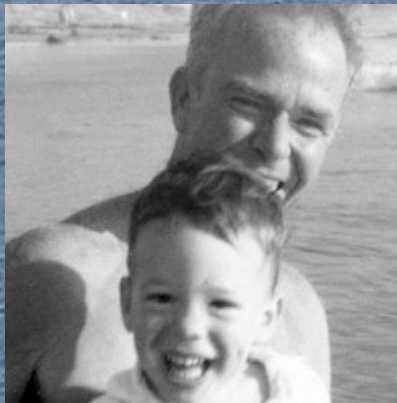
It's funny the things you remember about your dad once he is gone. He had this sock drawer. In it, his socks were balled together like little fruits, different colors, so alien to my own socks, all white, which got folded in half in long flat lines by my mother.

He did a lot of domestic chores differently than she, who was eight years his junior. "I was balling socks when you were still in diapers," he would say, or "I was already making beds when you were..."

He had hankies in the drawer too, those red patterned ones like cowboys wore, or white for when he might need to blow his nose in church. Hankies were from a time when men wore hats. Gone, like my dad.

Hankies and hats seem like vestiges from another era, when the planet was still cooling, maybe, and men had a lot more head colds. These days, aside from hipsters, the only hats men wear are ball caps, as if we are all inexplicably, as a gender, off-season outfielders.

My dad never wore a ball cap in his life, but he did have a "rain hat," an old brown Indiana Jones style fedora he wore doing outdoor work in bad weather.



It looked like rats had made an appetizer of the brim, then realized they could do better.

In the summer he would wear his "fun hat," one of those floppy cloth fishing hats into which you are supposed to stick your fly fishing lures. Before leaving on a family road trip, he would appear in it. Without it, the fun could not officially begin.

My dad did a lot of physical labor, and eventually his work shirts would get thin and begin to have holes and rips in them. Maybe we kids grabbed him once and accidentally made one of the holes bigger, and then he said go for it; I can't remember. But my sister and I ripped the old shirt right off him, tore it to shreds, as if he were some geriatric Incredible Hulk, too infirm to bust out of it himself.

Ever after, whenever one of his work shirts got threadbare he would don it so we kids could rip it off him. I am going to assume your family had weird traditions too.

The saddest day I know of is the day you go without once thinking about your old man. This is not one of those days.

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Keeping it Under Control

by Captain Dale Plummer

As a TowBoatUS Captain, I have a thousand stories about what can go wrong out on the water. One thing the more dangerous stories have in common is that the Captain lost control of his boat when the engine broke down, or the sails became snarled, because he failed to throw out an anchor. The anchor is a little-talked about piece of emergency equipment that can change a perilous situation to one of predictability the moment it grabs hold of the bottom.

It amazes me the number of boaters that I run into each season who say that they don't have an anchor on board. "We weren't planning on anchoring out," described one unlucky boater "just heading out for our maiden voyage of the season." When his 28' Bayliner broke down the Captain lost control of his vessel and a summer thunderstorm blew his boat onto a jetty. The boat ended up with a fist-sized hole and the owner ended up with no boat. An anchor could have completely changed the end of that story.

I recommend having two or more anchors on-board at all times: One anchor ready to deploy for typical, sandy bottom, sunny day situations. Another anchor, a size or two larger, as a back-up or storm anchor. You may even want a third anchor of a different style for a different bottom type. Know your boat's anchor size requirements, select the right style for the underwater terrain in your area, and then, know how to set the anchor so that it grabs hold and keeps your boat under control. While underway a prepared captain will always be considering, "How fast can I effectively deploy my anchor if I lost propulsion now?"



BoatUS editors wrote a comprehensive tech article on anchors and anchoring requirements. You can find more online at <http://www.boatus.com/boattech/articles/anchoring.asp>

Remember, anchors and effective anchoring isn't just for raft ups and staying on the fish. Keep your boat under control when it counts by having an anchor and knowing how to use it.

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Last Boat in Line

By L. Alan Keene

It's SHOWTIME! Your heart starts to race. Your palms start to sweat. Reaching for the water bottle to cure that cotton mouth, you flash back to 8th grade world history class.... the one where you had to stand up in front of the class and deliver that oral report on the Roman Empire. You were scared to death that day! Scared to death that you'd make a fool of yourself. Just like you feel right now.

Moving up in line, you keep hoping that somebody ahead of you will mess up. That somebody will make those ugly mistakes before you do. But no such luck! Everybody's perfect. Everybody looks like they could do it in their sleep. Maybe the crowd will be kind. Or maybe you'll get lucky and put on a flawless performance.....yeah right. Your stomach starts to flip flop as the guy in front finishes up. The stage is clear.....YOU'RE UP!!!

It was just last Friday that you bought this little center console. Fred from down the street had it up for sale and you'd always admired it, sitting there on its trailer in his driveway. And just last Sunday morning you'd spent almost two hours learning how to back it up. You wish you'd had more time, but the stores opened and the parking lot filled up. But the key to successful backing, you decided, was to go slowly and just make small corrections as you go. Don't panic. Just relax and let the car push the trailer right on down the ramp. Somehow relaxing was a lot easier back in the mall parking lot.

As you pull ahead and swing your rig around to the right, you can feel the eyes. "OK," you say to yourself, "just remember what you learned last week. Keep your hand on the bottom of the wheel and turn it in the direction you want the trailer to go. And remember to go slow! OK, here we go. That's it, that's it....so far so good. Oh, (expletive)! Turned the wrong way! Stop...STOP!! Now, just pull ahead and straighten it out.... that's it. Now just relax. NO, NOT THAT WAY!!"

After the 7th pull up, you find yourself in the midst of your worst nightmare. Most of the onlookers are acting like they attended the Donald Trump School of Diplomacy. Some are pointing and laughing. Others just throwing their hands up in disgust.... especially the ones at the front of the line. You don't know what to do! The harder you try, the worse it gets.

"Hey, buddy," somebody yells out, "why not keep that little 16-footer in a slip next year? Or better yet, why not try GOLF!" With that, the place erupted.

You can't decide what to do. Should you just give up and drive away, tail between your legs...or keep trying. What you really wish is that you could climb in a hole somewhere and forget this whole thing ever happened.... but you can't! You decide to give it one last try.

"(Expletive) 'em," you say to yourself, "just go real slow and correct your mistakes before they get too big. Ok, here we go.... only about 25 feet to go. SLOW....SLOW, that's it. Now easy, nice and easy. TURN THE OTHER WAY!!! That's it. Ok, we're almost there. The water's right up to the axel. We're there!

THANK YOU, LORD! We made it!

The mock applause is deafening. The truck horns reminiscent of New Year's Eve. You don't know whether to laugh or cry. As you start to open the car door, a hand grabs your shoulder and starts shaking.

"WAKE UP, WAKE UP, JACK!", your wife's voice filtering into the worst day of your life. "It's 7:30. We've got to try out our new boat today! If we don't hurry, we'll be the last boat in line at the ramp!"

With a thankful sigh and a knowing smile, you roll over and pull up the covers. "Let me get just a few more minutes' sleep, Hon", you hear yourself say. "There are A LOT worse things than being the last boat in line!"



photo by Katie Grasmick

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Boating on the Bay, July 4, 2017

*I've seen the Summer reflection,
As it glints across the Bay,
Memories made,
If only for the briefest of seconds.
Like a passing thunder storm,*

*I've felt the Morning heat,
Give indication,
Weather? Or not,
"It's going to be hot today."*

*I've sensed the coming Fall,
Like a seagull,
I laughed at the thought,
Not wanting to look that far forward,*

*I've seen the Summer reflection,
As it glimmers on the Bay,
Memories are made,
A few friends gather,
To quench a thirst.*

Scott Kelsey

Is it really ‘Doable’?

by Doug and Brenda Dawson

We read with interest Captain Mark Galasso's article "To Go or Not to Go" in the June issue of Upper Bay Boating of how boaters make their decisions to "go or not".

Chesapeake can transform from perfectly flat mirror-like conditions to ten footers in a matter of 4 hours. This was our first experience crossing Chesapeake on a 43' Viking Aft Cabin Motor Yacht travelling from Lake Ontario to Florida.

It is also our experience that fellow boaters are extremely helpful and share information—particularly about the weather, wind, and waves. Even though the following story happened in Abaco, Bahamas, it is a valuable lesson for boaters everywhere, including Chesapeake.

We set out from Great Guana Cay for Green Turtle Cay one morning when we were cruising Abaco, Bahamas. This required going through the dreaded "Whale Passage" and a 5-mile stretch of open Atlantic Ocean that is traditionally rough, as the sea builds on the shallow water adjacent to the Cays.

Rough Ride

"The Whale is doable" we heard a boater announce on the VHF in response to another boater's inquiry. We figured it would be rough but had decided we'd be able to handle it. We did experience some extremely sharp waves from the Atlantic Ocean that were gaining a lot of energy rolling over the shallows adjacent to the passage—8 footers on the beam and stern quarter. This section is wide open to the Atlantic even though it is buoyed to guide us around all the shoals.

By the time we got through the Whale and around the corner to the protected water at Green Turtle, it was raining heavily and conditions were worsening. Our 41' Motor Yacht was not intended for offshore cruising, because it was a bit top heavy and had a maximum speed of 10 knots as well as being rudder challenged. With a less experienced captain, The Whale would have won. It wouldn't have been "doable" that morning.

As we waited it out on our mooring at Great Turtle, we became quite concerned about the earlier message on the VHF. What did "doable" really mean? What size was his boat? What type of boat was it? What was the captain's skill level? Did he know the weather was worsening?

Misleading

We felt that other boaters could be misled and run into trouble if their boat type and size couldn't handle the rough seas and more importantly, if the captain didn't have the required skill level. I wouldn't have called it "doable". On our two-month cruise in the Bahamas, we'd seen and spoken to many boaters who weren't expert boat handlers, who would have had a very frightening experience if they had attempted "The Whale" that morning because they thought it was "doable".



We would suggest that, when someone reports that a particular passage is "doable", before setting out to do it yourself on that unknown person's recommendation, it would be safest to get on the VHF and ask a few questions:

- What type and size of boat are you in?
- What is your skill level (compared to mine)?
- What is the size and direction of the seas?
- When did you experience these conditions?

You may learn that the passage is doable for him in his boat built for offshore running and that he's been yachting forever. By comparison, you may be top heavy in your narrow beamed boat that was designed for calm waters with you as a novice at the wheel. That's a whole different kettle of fish. The passage may have been "doable" for him but may definitely not be "doable" for you.



If a snow plow operator goes out in a storm and can make it through treacherous roads with hip high snow banks, it doesn't mean that it's doable for you in your pickup truck with summer tires!

It's no different on the water. What is doable for one boat and Captain, isn't necessarily doable for another.

Make your own decisions

The message here is, make your own boating decisions with knowledge. Don't just blindly follow or you could get in serious trouble. Ask questions. Check the weather reports. Talk to the locals.

Know what your boat and crew are capable of handling and more importantly, what your skill level is. If you are nervous or hesitant about going out, then you probably shouldn't. You should adopt the Bahamian philosophy "Sit back and wait for the weather". Or as Brenda says, "If in doubt, don't". You can always enjoy a longer stay where you are and continue under safer conditions later.

It is far better that your family remembers the extra day on the beach rather than never forgets the terrifying bad weather experience.

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Doug and Brenda Dawson

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Boat Dog



My name is Penny, Christine Stillwaugh's dog keeping an eye out on the Bohemia River

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Getting to Ragged Point

Friday morning. We met at Ragged Point to begin the fourth leg of the Chesapeake Bay series. The weather forecasts for the upcoming weekend ranged from sunny and warm to fog with a chance of wind and rain to just wind gusting to 20 mph. This morning, however, it was overcast. The winds had not yet risen. We talked amongst ourselves and the consensus was "Heck, one day on the water is better than none." So, we arranged the kayaks for the shuttle to Little Creek and departed.

Dark and billowy clouds hung over Crab Alley. Winds were out of the north with gusts to 9-10 mph. If the forecast held, then we would have partial sunshine by noon. Jay suggested we paddle straight to Wades Point rather than crossing to Rich Neck as originally planned. The change would extend the crossing to 5 miles, but we would benefit from having the winds at our back, rather than on the rear quarter deck. The new compass heading would be 195° M.

As we passed Turkey Point we began to feel the effects of the wind over the building fetch. A few rollers came past, causing us to focus on braces and correcting strokes. Midway across Eastern Bay I estimated the waves to be 1-1.5 feet; still manageable and not outside our comfort zone. It was turning into a fun paddle. Nearing Wades Point, I realized the trade-off for taking the direct route across the bay. We would miss our planned rest stop at Claiborne. Fortunately, we were able to find a nicely protected cove to land and get out of the wind. We stood on shore and ate our morning snacks as we prepared mentally for the next leg of the paddle.

Paddling from Wades point, the waves hit us on beam. This would have been a miserable crossing in a recreational kayak. Rec kayaks, with their flattened hull, have great initial stability, but in a beam sea the hull tends to follow the shape of the wave passing beneath it. You experience a lot of rocking motion. Relatively minor waves can cause a rec kayak to capsize. This constant rocking motion also promotes sea-sickness. In contrast, sea kayaks, when viewed in cross-section, have rounded hulls. When hit broadside by a wave, the paddler leans into it and places his paddle on the wave's crest for support. The kayak bobs up and down, but side-to-side rocking motions are minimized. Sea kayak design sacrifices initial stability for improved secondary stability, meaning that the kayak can be leaned in a comfortable and predictable manner. As waves pass beneath it, the paddler's body experiences minimal tilting. On the western side of Bay Hundred Peninsula, we again picked up a following sea.

Bay Hundred Peninsula extends from Claiborne to the tip of

Tilghman Island. If you haven't heard the term before, you're not alone. The name doesn't appear on marine or topographical maps to my knowledge. It's a throwback term, used by the residents. In medieval England, the term described the area of a piece of property. A "hundred" referred to the number of acre blocks it contained, or the number of farms or settlers on the property, or the area required to recruit 100 fighting men. Apparently, the neck ending at Tilghman island got its name when Talbot county was divided up in the mid-1600s. It stuck, and today several businesses and restaurants keep it alive.

Looking out towards Poplar Island, I noticed a two-posted sign standing about 150 yards off shore. Curious, I approached it expecting to read something like "Danger. Obstruction." But no, instead, it read "Goat Island. Private property. Keep off." I thought, "Island? What island? Keep off what?" Then, I looked down and saw several very large rocks beneath my boat. Goat island isn't an island, it's a shoal. One more disappeared island. Bob, great adventurer that he is, decided he would set out on a mid-voyage expedition to explore Goat Island. Carefully, he navigated the rocky outcroppings and moments later reported boastfully that he had just successfully circumnavigated Goat Island.

At the southern end of the peninsula proper, we entered Knapps Narrows. Up until the mid-1800's, the inhabitants of Tilghman Island had to cross these narrows by boat or horse-drawn wagon. General Tench Tilghman, wishing to develop the island, recognized that before he could do so the island would need an easier access. He sold the bottom estate, then known as Black Walnut plantation for \$4000 and used the proceeds to build the first bridge to the island. The original bridge was replaced by a drawbridge, known as a rolling lift trunnion. It allows tall boats to transit the narrows without the necessity of a tall bridge structure. Increased access to the island allowed the parceling of properties and quickly brought farmers and watermen alike. It also brought a boat-building industry which further spurred the developing oyster industry. Tilghman still boasts of having the largest Skipjack fleet in North America, although most today take out tourists rather than harvest oysters. As we passed through, the draw bridge opened to allow a cruiser passage. Yielding to the larger boat, we passed under the bridge, then headed south towards Dogwood harbor.

By arrangement, our spouses met us at Chesapeake House. That afternoon, while sitting in Blue Crab Deck, we talked over the day's paddle. Soon, talk turned to the weather. A high-pressure cell

was sitting on us. Tomorrow, it would begin moving, putting us at risk for high winds through Saturday evening. Tomorrow's Choptank River crossing would challenge everyone's skill level. Decisions, decisions.

Dinner Friday evening was in Harrison's Restaurant. The wives talked openly about kayaking, and about living with a kayaker. There was general agreement that sea kayaking is an addiction. Like most addictions, it has no cure. No matter how much effort is expended to suppresses it, kayakers always relapse. During the summer months, kayakers will disappear sometime during each weekend, only to show up a day or so later with tales of high adventure. The most common symptom noted by a kayaker's enabler, I mean spouse, is the "stoop-shouldered walk." It comes from sitting for extended periods of time in a cramped cockpit with outstretched legs. The symptoms go unnoticed by other kayakers and require a verbal command from a spouse or significant other to correct. It is not uncommon to hear "Straighten up!" or "Posture, posture..."

Exactly what kayakers are addicted to, however, remains vague. In some, the kayak is just the vehicle used to experience the Bay's magnificent beauty. Others appear to be fueled by the exercise paddling requires. And yet others use their kayaks to challenge Mother Nature. They paddle out in hazardous weather conditions just for the thrill of it all. Bring to these experiences an enhanced opportunity to meet and talk with interesting people from all walks of life, and you have a narcotic that is too enticing to pass. Those spouses. They know us too well.

Towards the evenings end, conversations returned to the next day's weather. Should we, or should we not paddle? Our options were: wait until morning to make the call, recover the cars and paddle locally, bag the trip and reschedule later, or spend an additional evening at Chesapeake House and finish the paddle Sunday. In the end, everyone decided to bag the trip and return at a later date.

Saturday morning. I woke early. Outside, a colorful sunrise was breaking over Dogwood Harris Creek. At 5:45 a.m., the winds picked up. By 7:00 a.m., paddlers were beginning to find their way down to their kayaks to pack gear. We chatted with one another; supporting each other's decision to concede the paddle. At 8:15 a.m. we all met in Harrison's, resigned to the fact this would be our final meeting. While waiting for coffee, I returned to my room for a final weather check.

NOAA had issued a small craft advisory. Winds would approach 25 mph throughout the day and create 3 feet waves in the Bay. These are simply awful paddling conditions. But, the Weather Underground's forecast had been updated. They were now predicting the high would move off early and that winds would taper throughout the day. So, which forecast would turn out to be correct? I took my tablet back to breakfast, explained what I had learned, then suggested that we take another vote. To no one's surprise, Chip and Mike were both in. Aht stated that she would vote group. I was in, leaving the tipping point with Bob and Jay. Bob looked at me and stated emphatically, "No." Then, a few moments later, he smiled broadly and said, "I'm only kidding. Of course, I'm in." Jay finalized the decision. Game ON!!

We said goodbyes to our spouses and launched 30 minutes behind our scheduled 9:00 a.m. departure. Everyone was in high spirits. We were entering a section of the Bay made famous by James A. Michener's epic novel, "Chesapeake". The paddle would begin with a 4.5 mile open-water crossing of the Choptank River.

We were becoming comfortable in waves. Well, maybe reasonably comfortable... Aht, described Saturday's waves as "creepy" and I guess I agree; particularly when large ones passed. First, the stern suddenly dropped and you felt like someone had just grabbed you and pulled you to a stop. Then another wave would roll in, pick up your stern and toss you forward. You were surfing. And that's the way the paddle went. Stop, surf, stop, surf. Creepy, yes, but also fun.

Cooks Point is divided now. It is a flat spit of land, or rather island,



split away from the mainland by a shallow channel. Erosion is evident everywhere. Milky waters, laden with white clay range far from the shoreline. The skeletal remains of trees that once must have stood on the beach, now stand 50 yards from shore. Old pilings, a foot across at the top and 4 inches in diameter below the high tide line stand abandoned 60 yards from shore. At some time, there must have been a long pier here. Now, the beach is littered with the dried remains of old hardwoods. What could cause this much erosion? We speculated that the land's low elevation has much to do with it, as do the prevailing winds from the southwest blowing across a wide expanse of bay. But, soil composition must also play a role. Here, the shoreline is white clay, whereas the northern banks of the Chesapeake are red clay. Whatever the cause, erosion here was greater than anywhere else we had traveled.

After lunch, we departed for Hills Point. To get, there we chose the direct route across Trippe Bay. This crossing would again put the winds and waves directly on our beam. As I approached Hills Point, the waves again began to build. The shallow waters of a shoal formed by what was once the headland of Hills Point, was causing the rollers to crest and break. Several times, Jay disappeared from my view as both he and I dropped into a trough between two wave crests. Finally, I thought, the weather forecasters have gotten it right. Waves are "...two (pause) to three (pause) feet..." as the automated voice on NOAA radio states. Beyond the shoal, the sea again calmed.

Hills Point hooks to the west and, in so doing, blocks waves arriving from the northeast. We stopped in the little lagoon it forms and snacked while resting quietly in our kayaks. Ahead of us lay the most strenuous section of the paddle.

Ragged Point Island lies at the southernmost end of Hills Point neck. Whoever named this island saw it for what it is – a very ragged little island indeed. The only living trees on the island are at its center. Only the branchless trunks of dead or dying loblolly pine rim the shoreline. The island is privately owned, and get this, has its own tennis courts, a pool, a shooting range, and its own airstrip. You must paddle around it, because the owners have closed the channel that separates the island from the neck with a fenced off elevated road.

Entering Brooks Creek from the southernmost tip of Ragged Point, we ran headlong into the 15 mph winds that had been pushing us southward all day. It was going to be a slog back to our cars. We arrived exhausted. Spirits quickly recovered. Everyone changed clothing, loaded kayaks, then set off for Little Creek landing.

All-in-all, this was a great trip. We are beginning to paddle as a group. Our experience with moderate winds and waves helped us build confidence. And best of all, we had passed the half-way point on our voyage to the sea.

Live Aboard

by
Don and Gail
Elwell

Life on the water is full of lessons.

One of my slipmates has a grandson, a boy of 5 or 6. full of noise and energy and inquisitiveness about boats and the water and life, as is appropriate. The other day they were docking and his grandmother said "pull the boat over so we can get off."

Pull the boat over?

The lad gave a tentative tug on the line and looked up at the flybridge to his family.

"No, PULL it." said his Grandmother, a long time sailor, "long pull."

He did. First a bit, then putting his wiry little back into it, and low and behold, wonder of wonders, this 12,000 pound vessel, driven by massive twin 450's that had been moments before snarling below decks, this thing which was probably, to him, the size of a house, obediently and docilely sidled over to the pier to let them off. His face said it all. Over the next days we've watched him, getting more and more confident, more and more at home with the multiple and often conflicting forces one must deal with on the water, in matters dire and trivial.

The boy probably won't remember that moment, that tiny tick upward in his understanding of mass and physics, but he'll remember it's lesson. I remember my own youth on the Gulf Coast. I had my own little sailboat, a Sailfish, and would sail solo for miles up and down the Santa Rosa Sound with only my dog as occasional companion, getting aground and tipping over, getting sunburned and chilled and, in general, letting the physics of wind and water become a part of my muscle memory, something so ingrained that it becomes part of you.

Later in his life, if he's lucky, my neighbor's grandson will go to school and learn the hard science and maths behind what he's just experienced, learn how to calculate and predict masses and inertia, waveform and buoyancy with mathematical precision that can be anticipated accurately and shared universally.

But without that visceral experience in your bones, it's all just so many numbers.

We've spent the week working on our new hardtop, getting prepped for the installation of solar panels, and, in general, making our space more livable, being, as per usual, rather silly about working in this heat and the direct sun. Tonight we'll grill out, maybe some local fish and fresh local corn from Zaradkha's farm and a glass of chilled white wine. Tomorrow, we'll get up and do it all again.

Life on the water does not suck.

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The new, screened wheel-house will be a wonderful chill space.



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Magellan finds it all too exhausting.

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