

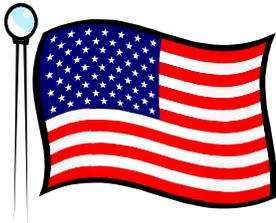
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FLORIDA SAILING & CRUISING SCHOOL

Experience the Boating Life!



E-YARDARM – November 4, 2008

SPECIAL POST-ELECTION EDITION

Boating: For a Brighter View of Life

By Barb Hansen

You know something is not right when you say "Good morning" and the other person dourly answers, "I wish."

Why the negativity, I wonder. Well, if somebody has lost a job or a family member, I get it, but this person hasn't lost his job. He hasn't lost a family member. He has just bought into the malady that is sweeping the nation - gloom and doomitis.

Yes, the news of late has been rather depressing. The business slowdown, the rising cost of living, the loss of jobs... When you do the math it's not a pretty picture. I don't think there is any sector of our economy that has not been down except, perhaps, sales of antidepressants and alcoholic beverages.

I was recently reminded of the story of two young boys who were each put into a room where doctors could observe what made them happy. Billy was put in a room full of toys, games and candy while Jimmy was put into a room filled with horse manure. It wasn't long before Billy had played with all the toys and games and had eaten all the candy. He started crying for more. Meanwhile, Jimmy was playing with the manure, making it into balls and tossing it all around the room. The doctors were astonished. Finally, they asked Billy why he was so happy in this room by himself. He said it was because he knew with that much manure in the room there had to be a pony around there somewhere!

Right now it's hard to think about anything positive when we are surrounded by so much that is negative. When everything we read is bad news and everything we watch is bad news, it's easy to just feel bad.

When I tell people that I'm in the yacht charter and yacht school business, the response is often wide-eyed like, "Wow," or "How cool!" And it is, even when I'm dutifully at my desk and computer. But just about every week I try to get on the water on the boat. Even a short ride across the harbor in the sunshine and fresh air is good medicine for me.

I am not a real doctor but I sometimes play one in this column and this is my considered medical advice for our nation's malaise. Go down to the water's edge and catch some sunshine. And if you really need a stronger dose, then my prescription is to get in a boat and push away from all of that land-based negativity.

Oh, sorry, I just can't, says Mr. Busy. There's no time, says Mrs. Hurry. I have things to do, places to go and people to see. There's no time left for me.

Stop that.

Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Take this long weekend of opportunity to find the fair winds and calm seas of your mind amidst an ocean of worries and woes. Get out on the water if you can.

Perhaps a Thanksgiving weekend charter boat cruise? We often get calls from people who want to spend time on the water with family and friends for a special occasion such as an anniversary or a milestone birthday. There's something celebratory about boating. Even in a season of doom and gloom, we have much to celebrate.

Marinas, I have observed, are like Billy and Jimmy's play rooms. Some people need a big expensive yacht to make them happy and some boaters are happy with just a kayak or canoe. It's not the vessel that determines their happiness; it's what they experience with it that gives them pleasure.

My husband has always said, "If your head is on right, a tin cup can be a silver chalice. It's all about how you look at life."

Boating keeps our heads on right and lets us see the brighter side of our awesome world.



From the Mailboat



Barb -

I couldn't agree with you more. Boating is good for the body, the mind, and the soul.

My wife and I always take the long way around whenever we use our boat, just to enjoy the wonderful ride and relaxation it provides. Boating therapy is much cheaper than years of psychoanalysis and magic pills, and the activity itself is a heck-of-a-lot more fun!

Thanks for the great article,



Signed: Bob

Subject: Thanks for the reminder Barb.

Barb,

I just read your piece in the "Trade Only" online addition of Soundings and want to thank you for the reminder. We are on the upper Chesapeake Bay where most boats are now being winterized and we envy your boating climate.

As an example of your "even a short ride across the harbor in the sunshine" -this past Saturday we were quite despondent as we had to move our boat to the next marina, just a 1/4 mile away, for winterizing when we said "It's a beautiful day on the bay so lets cruise and cruise we did for 6 hours and had the best day on the water all season.

Thanks, Captain Dick



Barb,

I thoroughly enjoyed your recent comments !! Thank you for taking the time to share wise words.

Let your worries wash away in your wake.

Nautical knots make strong family ties.

Sincerely,

Jane from New York



Editor's Note: *With the election over, now is the time to get up and get out on the water with family and friends! The collective message from Jane, Bob and Captain Dick is that boating is relaxing and enjoyable. So, what could be better for our national attitude than spending time on a beautiful boat in a beautiful cruising area?*

Let's get out on the water and just have fun!



The Marine Industry Needs Us and We Need Boating!

By Barb Hansen

When the going gets tough, the tough...go boating.

If we didn't already know that big banks were folding, we're reminded daily by bold headlines, shouting TV pundits and screen images from Washington showing our representatives wringing their collective hands.

Boaters always take bad news badly. Confronted by bad economic news, our instinct tells us to start wearing a frown and stop spending time on the boat. That's exactly wrong.

Yes, these are tough times but -- think about it -- now more than ever we need our boats to help us keep on an even keel emotionally and physically.

We've been down this road before. September 2001 comes to mind. Things looked pretty bleak. Remember how worried we were then about the future of our sport? Well, as you know, things got better. They usually do.

In a column I wrote then I said if you were a citizen of the 1950s you lived in an economy still recovering from the great depression and a world war. Some made enough money to buy a wooden boat just right for a rented five horsepower kicker. Not bad in those days.

But the economy got even better. Fiberglass boats appeared. Outboard motors got bigger and fast enough even to water ski. Families traded in little boats for bigger boats. Cruising boats got bigger and more comfortable.



Then in the late 1970s gas prices soared because the oil-producing cartel cut back on production. It was so bad that President Carter said maybe boating should be banned on weekends. That's how politicians think.

In the 1980s our elected representatives, thinking that all boaters were rich and richer, put a 10 percent luxury tax on "yachts." A luxury tax, they called it. Boat plants closed. Thousands lost their jobs. What were the politicians thinking?

They finally repealed that stupid tax. And things got better.

These tough times will pass, too, and boating will have another long run in the sunshine. We're already seeing a silver lining. The slowing economy has brought down gasoline and diesel prices.



Indeed, when people put a sharp pencil to the calculation they discover that boating is not nearly as expensive as they imagined and often it is less expensive than other recreational activities.

Vic and I are getting into the lets-go-cruising mood and making lists of friends we'd like to join us. In the past, we've taken many friends cruising and some got so hooked on it they bought boats, too.

As the media keep reminding us, times are tough and may be getting tougher. Okay. But that doesn't mean we should stop being with the people we love and stop doing the things that make our lives whole.

It's also better for boating businesses and for competition, which keeps prices low. Support your favorite marinas. Dine at your favorite waterfront restaurants.



We need the companies that make boats or charter them. Support them because, you know, the government will not. Only banks get that special treatment.

As citizens and boaters in these times we are going to pay. Let's not forget to play.

NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO GET OUT ON THE WATER!



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