



# *The Smoke Signal*

Newsletter of the BLACKHAWK CHAPTER-ACBS



VOLUME 18 ISSUE 3

May/June 2012



## **2012 Geneva Lakes Antique and Classic Boat Show**

**September 28-30 2012  
at The Abbey in Fontana, WI**

**Registration  
is now Open**

**See Page 3**

**For Complete Details Visit  
[WWW.GenevaLakesBoatShow.com](http://WWW.GenevaLakesBoatShow.com)**

## **A Life-Changing Journey**

(by Alex Watson Part 3 of 3 continued from last issue)

### **Part 3 — Picking up the Pieces**

It seems amazing but all of us were treated and released same day, after about 6-8 hours in hospital. It was late at night when we left. My Dad came back to my house with my Mom as he was pretty sore and I wanted to keep an eye on him. John and Jim, our captain and crew, overnighted at a hotel and flew home from there.

I called the insurance company. When I bought the boat, I had the company — Auto-Owners — send me a binder. When the accident happened, just a few days after initiating coverage, I had not yet made one single payment. So here I had to call them and tell them we'd had a total loss. But I've got to say, they were quite phenomenal. Not only did they reimburse us for the boat, they also paid us an extra 10% of the value for personal items, things of that nature.

Shortly after the accident, the Coast Guard was making contact with us. They wanted the briefing. I ended up going down to Detroit the following week to meet with them. The freighter captain and crew had met with the Coast Guard separately, so we did not see them. I believe the Coast Guard actually briefed the freighter people the same day of the accident. I think they boarded and dealt with them directly, with drug testing and the like. I understand the Coast Guard wanted to brief us same day as well, but given our condition, the paramedics whisked us away before they could do that.

At the briefing, our whole experience was recounted. We started to get into the technicalities. The channels we were monitoring, the equipment we had on board, this whole situation. We gave our story.

*(Continued on page 12)*

# BLACKHAWK CHAPTER

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With summer in full swing I hope everyone is getting out on the water. After the mild winter, we are now facing dry conditions in most of the Midwest. The lack of rain is causing some issues for local lakes and rivers. Hopefully you will find plenty of water under your keel and that you are able to enjoy one of the warmest summers on record.



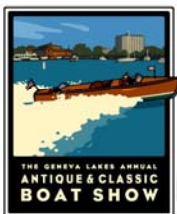
This spring I started a restoration project on a 1958 15' Milo Craft with a 30 HP Evinrude Lark outboard sitting on a 1958 Tee-Nee trailer. The boat was in reasonable shape and complete. The project started on plan with the removal of the motor, hardware and interior components. After flipping the hull, stripping and then sanding the bottom went smoothly and it only took about a week. Then after righting the boat progress ground to a crawl. It turns out stripping off 5 coats of interior paint and varnish is more of a challenge than I had anticipated! The tight spaces and curved surfaces are making it difficult to remove the old finishes. The good news is that we are finally past the stripping tasks and we can focus on the wood working, final sanding and finishing. It has been a fun project and the boys, Alex & Nick are enjoying lending a hand. Hopefully we will have it done in time for the Geneva Lakes show at the end of September.

We have two upcoming events that you will not want to miss, the Navy Week Bicentennial and the Geneva Lake Boat Show. August 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> we have the Navy Week Bicentennial at the Milwaukee lakefront Discovery Center. This is an exciting event hosted by the Glacier Lakes and Blackhawk Chapters. There will be both land and water display space available and lots of activity throughout the show. We also have the Geneva Lakes Boat Show September 28<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>. This year we are back to our usual format for the show. Friday morning we have 3 estate tours and a lunch at the Lake Geneva Country Club followed by open boating in the afternoon. Friday evening we have dinner at the new Pier 290 restaurant at the Gage Marine complex. Saturday the boat show officially begins with numerous events and wrapping up with the boat parade at 4:00 PM. The awards dinner will be Saturday evening at the Abbey Resort. Sunday the boat show continues and will wrap up at 3:00 PM. Registration and information for both of these events can be found in this edition of the Smoke Signal.

Our 2012 season will wrap up this year with our fall dinner currently scheduled for Saturday October 13, 2012. Watch your email and the Blackhawk Web Site web site for details later this month.

As always watch your email or snail mail for the latest Blackhawk updates. Regularly check the Blackhawk web site at [www.blackhawkacbs.com](http://www.blackhawkacbs.com) for the latest information on club events and meetings. I look forward to see you all out on the water at our shows and events.

Mark Svoboda



The Blackhawk Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society  
present

## The Geneva Lakes Annual Antique and Classic Boat Show

At the Abbey Harbor, Fontana, WI Sept 28-30, 2012

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Mate: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

ACBS#: \_\_\_\_\_  
not required

Additional Crew: (First and Last name) \_\_\_\_\_

### Boat Exhibit Information - Saturday & Sunday Boat Show

☐ In Water (\$50) ☐ On Land (\$35) ☐ Nautical Exhibit (Free)\* ☐ For Sale (Additional \$35)

\*i.e. Model Boats, Outboard Motors etc. A nautical exhibit may not have items for sale. If you would like to be a for sale exhibitor please submit a "Boat Show Exhibitor" form. A boat can be displayed as a nautical exhibit but it will not be considered for awards, is not allowed to launch and cannot be for sale.

Boat Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturer \_\_\_\_\_

Model \_\_\_\_\_ Length \_\_\_\_\_ Engine \_\_\_\_\_ HP \_\_\_\_\_

*Use separate sheet for any extra boats*

Boat Registration Fee \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Events

#### Friday, September 28

**Estate Tour** – Tour estates by boat aboard historic Geneva Lake tour boats,  
followed by lunch at the Lake Geneva County Club

# Attending \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$50/Adult  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25/Child \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Reception Cocktails and Dinner at Pier 290** – Cocktails and Dinner at the new  
Gage Marine Pier 290 restaurant

# Attending \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40/Adult  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20/Child \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Saturday, September 29

**Awards Dinner** - 6:30pm The Abbey Resort

Dinner includes your choice of West Shore Sunset Chicken, Prime Rib or  
Grilled Mahi Mahi Cancun, Salad, Dessert and beverage.

*In an effort to honor the winners of the award categories, and recognize the owners, you must register for the Saturday dinner and be in attendance in order to be qualified to win one of the show awards.*

Prime Rib \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$50/Adult \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20/Child  
Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$50/Adult  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20/Child  
Mahi Mahi \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$50/Adult  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20/Child

**Weekend Package Discount** – For each adult participant registering for all three  
events: Estate Tour, Cocktail Dinner Buffet and Saturday Awards dinner receive  
a special Blackhawk discount of \$15.

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15/ea - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration forms received after September 10, 2010 additional \$25.00 late fee** (Check if late) ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to become a member of the ACBS and Blackhawk Chapter \$65/year \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Portions of this year's proceeds will be donated to the Lake Geneva Water Safety Patrol & Geneva Lake Conservancy*

**Deadline for all reservations and activities is Sept 10<sup>th</sup>. Registration, dinner and event fees are not refundable.  
Space is limited. All registrations are on a first come / first served basis.**

**INSURANCE CERTIFICATION:**

I certify that I am the owner of the above listed boat(s), engine(s), car(s), watercraft, displays, exhibits, or other item (here after collectively known as "boat") I intend to display at this event and that I have insurance to cover any damage to my boat or equipment, and to cover any liability for damages to others or their property arising from any use of my boat during or related to the 2012 Geneva Lakes Antique and Classic Boat Show in Fontana, WI for which they are herein registered. I agree to hold free and harmless, the officers, directors and volunteers of the Blackhawk Chapter of the ACBS, the Antique and Classic Boat Society, the Abbey Resort, the city of Fontana WI, advertisers and sponsoring organizations from any and all actions, claims, liabilities, assertions of liability, including reasonable attorney's fees, which in any manner arise from or be alleged to arise from any and all connected directly or proximately with the Boat Show identified above.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Insurance Certification must accompany registration.*

Make checks payable to:  
**Blackhawk Chapter, ACBS**

Send Registration To:  
**Matt Byrne**  
**2257 Red Maple Ln**  
**Aurora, IL 60502**

For additional info contact:  
[www.genevalakesboatshow.com](http://www.genevalakesboatshow.com)  
[GLBS@BlackhawkACBS.com](mailto:GLBS@BlackhawkACBS.com)  
or 630-802-2698

**AWARD CATEGORIES:**

This is a non-judged show. All awards will be determined by boat captains and/or the Boat Show Committee. The Boat Show Committee has the right to change the awards depending on the type of boats that are registered for the show. Awards will be presented at the Saturday evening banquet. People's Choice to be awarded on Sunday at 2:00pm.

Blackhawk Chapter Sharpest Arrow  
ACBS Most Preserved  
Best Chris Craft  
Best Century  
Best Strelow  
Best Contemporary  
Most Historic  
Best Fiberglass  
Best Outboard  
Skippers Choice  
Peoples Choice

Pre-War  
Best Utility under 22'  
Best Utility 22' & over  
Best Runabout under 22'  
Best Runabout 22' & over  
Post-War  
Best Utility under 22'  
Best Utility 22' & over  
Best Runabout under 22'  
Best Runabout 22' & over

**Final notes:**

The boat show runs through 3:00 p.m. on Sunday. Each year we have many spectators who attend the boat show on Sunday afternoon expecting to see the full line-up of boats on display. Therefore, participants are asked to leave their boats in the water (and land displays intact) on Sunday until 3:00 pm when the boat show officially ends.

Space is limited. All registrations are on a first come / first served basis. Reservations deadline is September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Lodging**

Please make hotel reservations directly with The Abbey Resort at 800-709-1323, mention the "Blackhawk Chapter Antique and Classic Show" for group rates. Group rates are for "Run of the House Rooms". You must identify yourself as a participant when making the reservation in order to receive the Boat Show rate. Boat show rates will not be honored at the point of checkout unless previously specified.





## BLACKHAWK CHAPTER FALL CRUISE AND HOUSE TOUR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2012



This year's cruise and house tour will visit three of the finest estates on Geneva Lake while transportation will be provided aboard three of the more interesting boats on the lake. The homes are: (1) the Dean and Rosemarie Buntrock estate, (2) the Bertil and Ulla Brunk estate, and (3) the Bonnie Deutsch and Joe Kinnebrew estate. The boats will be SEA LARK, POLARIS, and the steam boat LOUISE. Lunch at the Lake Geneva Country Club is included. Tours will depart from the Abbey Harbor House in Fontana at 8:30, 9:00, and 9:30 am. Tour time is approximately 4:45 minutes.

### Dean and Rosemarie Buntrock:

Dean grew up in South Dakota before World War II in an area often described as the "dust bowl" during the depression. At that time, people hunted for subsistence and Dean learned at an early age to hunt, a skill and an interest that has stayed with him throughout his life. He has hunted throughout the world and actively supports conservation efforts and preservation of animal habitats. He created Big Foot Farms in Walworth County, a 500 acre managed preserve for ducks and other water fowl. He was a founder and retired as president and CEO of Waste Management (WMX). His estate consists of a number of buildings. The main house is furnished with French and English antiques, custom carpets, and original art (including a painting done by an elephant). The coach house, which includes Dean's home office, is an English-styled accessory building. The grounds are wonderfully landscaped and have been featured in a number of publications. Artists visit from time to time to paint the interesting buildings and grounds.



The Buntrock Estate

### Bertil and Ulla Brunk:

Bertil and Ulla came from Sweden and arrived in Lake Geneva about 1960. He had been trained as a tool maker in Sweden and Switzerland after the war and he quickly earned a reputation for being able to build very fine, high precision metal stamping dies. Ulla had worked in a bank in Sweden and became his partner running the business. Brunk Industries initially made many electrical parts for Allen Bradley and also made parts for IBM Selectric typewriters. Today the company specializes in high-tech parts for the medical industry, especially surgical applications. Their story mirrors the proverbial American success story. Bertil has four wooden boats, the oldest being the 1910 Pettersen which he restored. Their home contains an eclectic collection of antiques and artifacts which reflect Bertil and Ulla's many interests.



The Brunk Estate

### Bonnie Deutsch and Joe Kinnebrew:

Bonnie and Joe share an 1890 Lake Geneva estate built by Martin Ryerson. Ryerson was the scion of a lumber fortune, his father having provided much of the lumber to rebuild Chicago after the Great Chicago Fire. He was described in a newspaper article at the time as the wealthiest young man in Chicago. After spending seven years going to school in Switzerland and France, he acquired a taste for art and spent the rest of his life collecting. He has been described as the single most important benefactor in the history of the Art Institute. Bonnie acquired the Ryerson home about 30 years ago and has fixed it up and made it warm and hospitable. Joe Kinnebrew is an artist of many talents – painter, sculptor, and computer designer to name a few. His outdoor art adorns many buildings including the Grand Rapids Library. He has a web site you can visit to see the range of his creations: [josephkinnebrew.com](http://josephkinnebrew.com). Many examples of Joe's creations can be seen on the grounds of the estate.



The Deutsch – Kinnebrew Estate

### The Lake Geneva Country Club:

Founded in 1895 by a group of Chicago business men, it is one of the oldest 18-hole golf courses in the Midwest. The course was originally laid out by the golf pro from St. Andrews in Scotland while on a tour of the United States and it is still basically unchanged from his concept. Indeed, many of the bunkers and course features have recognizable characteristics similar to St. Andrews.



Lake Geneva Country Club





**Come Share the Art of the Automobile!**

*Geneva Concoeurs d'Elegance*  
*Sunday, August 26, 2012*

Downtown Historic Third Street | Geneva, IL | Free & Open to the Public | 10 AM-4 PM



2012 Event Beneficiary:  
**LivingWell Cancer Resource Center**

**[www.genevaconcoeurs.net](http://www.genevaconcoeurs.net)**

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## Classified Corner FOR SALE

**FOR SALE:** 1962 Sea Skiff Ranger, 283 Chevrolet V8 Convertible Top, Like new Cushions, Newly refinished transom, All new flooring (white waffle) asking \$9800. New aluminum trailer optional +\$3200 - Don Taylor 630-632-9797

**FOR SALE:** 1957 20' Chris-Craft Holiday, in good-shape, new cover, newer trailer, and has 175 hp. I'm asking \$9500 OBO. Cell# 847-648-0138

**FOR SALE:** 1964 Lyman 25ft. Sleeper model Cuddy cabin w/marine head 327 cu. in. Gray Marine Fire ball engine All canvas including bimini, side curtains and mooring cover Includes: 6,000 lb. all galvanized Karavan trailer. \$16,000 CALL Ken 414-764-5949 or Email for more pictures kbourgeois1@wi.rr.com ( stored indoors and can be seen anytime with appointment)

**FOR SALE:** Chris Craft Engines K 100HP, KL 105HP, KLO 105HP, M 130HP, ML 145HP, MCL 175HP, also a dual carb 135HP Chrysler Crown. Ted 847-395-8902

**FOR SALE:** 1941 Chris Craft 16ft Deluxe, #57323; 60 hp Model B engine. New trailer w/disc brakes and swing away tongue. Complete photo documentation of rebuild. Boat made debut at National Show in Sept. 2011. Engine rebuilt by Cartner, upholstery by Ed's in Villa Park. I did the entire restoration, new chine's, frames, 5200 bottom, sideboards and new decks. Name is "Inheritance". Asking \$27,500. Can be seen most anytime by appointment here in Chicago area. George Haenisch 312-922-1700 X113 or cell 312-608-1116.

**For Sale:** 1955 Chris Craft 20' Continental. Original KLC 125 HP engine. Updated upholstery, custom cover, original but tight bottom, single axel trailer \$25,000 Ron (708) 442-9753, Lake: (262) 275-2475.

**For Sale:** Classic custom made wooden boat. 18 ft. Simmons Sea Skiff with 15 hp Johnson outboard, custom made 9 ft. oars, and trailer. All new 2005, used only 8 times. \$5,000/offer. (608) 831-1812.

**For Sale:** N.I.B.Federal Equip-Poise super cup prop. NiBari Bronze 14X3 -1" \$350.00; 2005 Jersey Skiff (J.S.44) 350 CU Engine-Built crate-Approx 395 H.P.-3/8' Marine Plywood Deck Frest Water Only-(Asking 23,900) Pictures are available email [sunny-girl4110@yahoo.com](mailto:sunny-girl4110@yahoo.com); 2 Hobbs HR meters N.I.B. 2.5" Hole fg 1960 25.00 each. Please call Bill @ 847-436-4975 with questions

### Blackhawk Smoke Signal Advertising Policy

Individual Blackhawk Chapter members may run a single complimentary non-commercial advertisement in any issue of the Smoke Signal. Individual advertisements will not be rerun unless the editor is notified prior to publication of the following issue. The editor reserves the right to edit if necessary to fit available space.

### Commercial Advertisements

Commercial advertisements will be run in each issue published during the course of the year unless prior arrangements are made. Six issues per year are published. The following rates apply for commercial advertising, on a per year basis. Contact your editor for more information:

	Business card sized	Quarter page	Half Page	Full Page
Members	\$40	\$80	150	\$300
Non-Members	\$60	\$100	170	\$320

Provide all advertisements to: Vicki Lynch 630-774-5682 or E-mail [stccloset@aol.com](mailto:stccloset@aol.com)

## Blackhawk Road Trip!

A group of Blackhawk members are organizing a group trip to the 2012 International Boat Show in September. This years event is being hosted by the Heartland Classics chapter at Big Cedar Lodge near Branson Missouri. Big Bear Lodge is about a 10 hour drive from the Chicago land area. For more information of the International boat show visit [www.tablerock2012.com](http://www.tablerock2012.com). If you're interested in joining the Blackhawk caravan contact Mark Svoboda at [msvoboda@ameritech.net](mailto:msvoboda@ameritech.net) or 630-208-1775.

**AGENDA FOR NAVY WEEK BICENTENNIAL OF THE WAR OF 1812**  
**August 10, 11, 12, 2012**

The Glacier Lakes Chapter and The Blackhawk Chapter will participate with in-water and on land displays, celebrating "Navy Week" at Discovery World. Three Navy Vessels including the USS HURRICANE a 170' Cyclone class patrol craft will be docked at Discovery World's Cruise Ship dock. Other water craft will include the Milwaukee Fire Boat and the S/V Denis Sullivan. The S/V Denis Sullivan will be the only schooner docked. It was originally hoped that other wooden schooners would participate. Due to budget issues, they will not be there.

There will be plenty of events: To commemorate the war, a large contingent of sailors and ships will be at the Milwaukee Lakefront. Milwaukee will be the first stop on the Great Lakes tour with visits by the frigate USS De Wert, the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Neah Bay and the Canadian Navy frigate HMCS Ville de Quebec.

There will be an air show, exhibits and demonstrations by the Navy Dive Team and Navy "Leap Frogs" Parachute Team. In addition, there will be musical performances by the Navy Band and the U.S. Coast Guard Silent Drill Team; a Navy SEAL fitness challenge; and ship tours.

**Bring mooring lines, bumpers and have proper Coast Guard safety equipment**

**FRIDAY AUGUST 10**

**TRAVEL TO DISCOVERY WORLD**

You will want to plan to be in the water or parked in front at Discovery World before 8:30AM

**SEE MAP**

**IN WATER Best Convenient Launching Option #1:** Launch at McKinley Marina 1750 N Lincoln Memorial Dr. Milw., WI 53202 Bob Talatzko, McKinley Marina launch person 414-273-5224. You can also park trailer Friday and Saturday night. Launch fee: depending on boat length \$12.00-\$15.50. Trailer storage for two days \$16.00. Maximum outlay: \$31.50

After launching, leave the trailer, take the vehicle to Discovery World to park in the under ground garage at Discovery World and proceed to Discovery World with your boat.(Assuming two people)

**IN WATER Launching Option #2:** Milwaukee County Riverfront Launch Ramp

Water St at Bruce St. 700 S Water. Milwaukee, WI. 53204 (Located next to Harbor Side Yacht Center 700 S. Water) Launch fee: depending on boat length \$12.00-\$15.50. Attendant may not be there. Trailer storage: "Sea Scout" identified fenced lot (Free trailer parking) Directly south of US Coast Guard Station 2420 So. Lincoln Memorial Dr. Milwaukee, WI 53207

One person can take boat to Discovery World, the other person can park the trailer at "Sea Scout" identified lot and drive to Discovery World to park vehicle at underground structure below Discovery World.

**LAND DISPLAY** Bring your boat and park at Discovery World in front of building. "turn around drive". 500 N. Harbor Dr. Milwaukee, WI 53202 Richard Cieslak, Marketing Director/show contact. 262-506-4239

**THERE WILL BE SECURITY FOR ALL MOORED AND LAND DISPLAY BOATS.**

**PARKING PASS** You will be given a parking pass to park in underground parking at Discovery World. It is important to get there as

early as possible. First come first served.

**Friday August 10-What's happening** -Discovery World open to public from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**WE WILL HAVE ACCESS TO OUR BOATS WHENEVER WE WANT AND WON'T BE AFFECTED BY THE ACTIVITIES OR THE OFFICIAL CLOSING OF DISCOVERY WORLD BOTH FRIDAY AND SATURDAY OR WEDDING ACTIVITIES.**

4:00-11 p.m. Fish Fry & A Flick (outside tent and East Dock)

This is open to public (purchase food on site)

We can participate in the Discovery World Activities or cruise the area for waterfront restaurants.

**We'll get maps to hand out that identify places to stop for Friday and Saturday**

**Saturday August 11-What's happening** Open to public from **10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Sunday August 12-Facility Open to public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.** We are free to leave anytime. Let's shoot for 3PM.

**Wil Vidal cell 414-870-1173 or Mark Svoboda cell 630-841-8540**





# Father's Day Cruise on the lower Fox River

By Eric & Kathy Moberg, photos by Shelly Svoboda

After a three year hiatus, the Port Edwards Restaurant in Algonquin was again the destination for the Blackhawk Annual Father's Day River Cruise. With thanks to Captain Ron Van Horn for organizing and to Turnkey Classics for providing the free launch for those of us who are not fortunate enough to live on the Fox Waterway, eight boats ferried 35 hungry souls down river from Burton's Bridge on a cruise custom made for wooden boat-ers. There was not a cloud in the sky, and not a lot of other boat-ers on the river. We arrived to adequate dock space and our boats were appreciated by the other Father's Day Brunch diners. We arrived early, and some boaters began the meal with the BEST Bloody Marys, complete with a smorgasbord of skewered delights!

For those of you who have never experienced the Port Edwards Brunch, let us tell you a little bit about it. Picture several nautically themed dining rooms complete with private dining on a sailboat or in a lighthouse. Now envision a large room filled with chefs eager to fill your plates with delicious entrees from carving and omelet stations, tables of salads, fruits, smoked fish, a large variety of seafood, and of course desserts, accompanied by complimentary champagne or mimosas.

Due to the unexpectedly large turnout, our group outgrew our reserved dining area on the second floor, so Port Edwards graciously accommodated us outside on the patio overlooking the Fox River and our wooden beauties. When our appetites for food, drink and socializing had been sated, the group dispersed to various secondary destinations. Hopefully, due to the great turnout, we can continue to keep this annual event on the calendar next year. Contact a Blackhawk Director with your thoughts or suggestions, and watch for info in the spring newsletter to sign up early for next year's cruise.





(Continued from page 1)

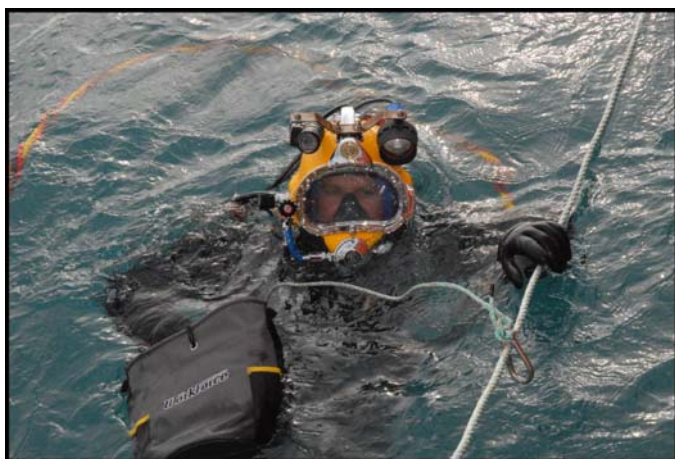
The Coast Guard was very closed-mouthed about what had happened. They took down our information, said they would be doing an investigation, and would let us know the results. Quite honestly, over the period of about the next year, there appeared to be a song and dance response on the Coast Guard's part. You could just tell they weren't interested in getting involved. The captain of the freighter was cited, but no other action was taken against him. In fact, I think that citing was later rescinded.

While we were working with the Coast Guard and their investigation, their line of attention began to change. They were asking us how much fuel was on board. From my calculations, we went down with a little over 200 gallons of diesel. Upon learning that, they said "You've got to get it out."

People may not know this, but if something happens and you have to salvage your boat, it's your responsibility to get it out of there. And that's not cheap. So we had to hire a marine salvage company. Although we were on the brink of winter, they started sending a diver down. I went with him because I thought it was going to be an easy hit to find it; it would ping on the sonar.

You know, the bottom of the Detroit River is very silty. We would do zig zags. Every time we thought we had it, the diver would go down. But the current is strong. So strong, we'd have to drop anchor and he'd have to follow the anchor rope. He also had to pick up the anchor on the bottom, and then move it. That's how he would move around the river bottom.

We searched for two weeks. And the only thing we could find was part of the boat that still had the shafts coming through their logs. The diver saw the shafts and told me they were so damaged, they were "bent like curly fries." You know, that's 1-1/2" stainless!



Those shafts were the only part of the boat ever found in two weeks of dives. So we went back to the Coast Guard and explained that we'd tried but without success. They allowed us to abandon the search with the condition if they ever got a slick, it would still be our responsibility. Even though I'm not a polluter, this exposure didn't leave me with a good feeling at all. But the marine salvage guy said we couldn't have sunk in a more perfect place, because it was just south of Ford's Rouge plant. If anything did bubble up, how could anyone say it was us, given how much stuff is coming out of Rouge?

We spent probably \$8,000 trying to find the boat. Part of the money we got from Auto-Owners ended up covering that. If we ever did find the boat or tanks, it was going to cost us more to hook it up and get it out of the River.

Because we weren't getting answers from the Coast Guard, we decided to pursue things in the courts. We just couldn't let it slide. The whole accident was really bothering us. We needed some satisfaction. So we started calling attorneys.

To be honest with you, a number of them that we called wanted nothing to do with it. They said "you were in the shipping channel, you were supposed to get out of their way, and that's all there is to it." But we did find a maritime attorney in our area who listened to me and was interested in hearing the details. I sat down with him, and told him exactly what had happened. After also reading our statements, he felt there was some wrongdoing. He said "ok, I'll take it." If we won, he would get his piece of the pie, plus expenses. Anything that was expense-related pursuing this came out of our pockets. The attorney was in his mid 40s and a real pit-bull!

It wasn't too long after we hired him that something stunning happened. Remember the fishermen that came over to us right after we'd been hit? Well, their story to the Coast Guard was unbelievable! I don't know if they were cracking the beers or what, but their statement was that they saw us come from behind the freighter, pass it on the Port side, then turn hard East, directly in front of it. That's what their statement was!

Well, when our attorney heard that, he sent us a letter saying "I no longer want to represent you on this case." I was so angry! The fishermen's story didn't even wash with those of the freighter bridge or the freighter bow watch guy. It made absolutely no sense. We were adamant that we never passed a freighter. Not even one the whole time on the River. So when our attorney sent us that letter, I hit the roof. I wrote him a letter shaming him for dropping us so easily. Well, he took us back on.

Our attorney gagged us. He told us if we said a word, one word to the media about what happened, it would be the end of our relationship. We understood why, but that was pretty rough on us. Because the story was on the news. And it was on the web. The freighter people were talking. Other people were talking. And we weren't allowed to push back. We so wanted to call people and set the record straight, because the picture they were painting just wasn't true.

[Here's something I pulled from the web to show what was being reported.] – Alex

#### "Gemini Involved in Collision"

10/23/04 8 p.m. Update

"Saturday afternoon the tanker Gemini was upbound in the lower Detroit River below Grassy Island when a 35-foot wooden pleasure boat misjudged the Gemini's distance and cut across the bow of the tanker. The pleasure craft was struck by the tanker, which had no way of stopping or adjusting course. The pleasure craft was destroyed, the wooden hull disintegrated. The crew on the Gemini responded by stopping the tanker and assisting the four

occupants of the small boat. All occupants were quickly recovered by another pleasure craft as pieces of their boat floated down river. The occupants of the boat were taken to a local hospital but there were no updates on their condition or extent of injuries.”

“Numerous agencies responded to the incident including local law enforcement. The Canadian Coast Guard was on scene with boats from their Amherstburg Base. A 47-foot boat (41306) and a 25-footer (255042) from the U.S. Coast Guard Station Belle Isle also responded to the scene.”

“The Gemini continued upbound to the Belle Isle Anchorage off Detroit for inspection, there were no visible signs of damage to the vessel as she passed Detroit. She arrived in the anchorage about 6 p.m., it is unknown how long she will remain anchored.”

- well, I have to say, WHAT A DUMBASS

- he “misjudged” the distance to cross in front of a freighter? oh, it didn’t see a friggin tanker chugging along in the channel?

- they are lucky they are alive, I hope they didn’t have any boat insurance cause that idiot does not need to get another boat - what a joke

We had to wait three years to hear what everybody involved had to say. Three years trying to figure out why this happened. When it came time for our depositions, I remember the freighter attorney was on one side of the table, and we and our attorney were on the other. My Dad gave his first. But when it was time for me to give mine, it was no different than how I’ve relayed it to you. Just telling this story was so overwhelming. I was deeply emotional. I remember our attorney looking at me quite surprised because, until that moment, he just hadn’t realized the terrible impact of that day.

You know, to this day, nobody heard any sounding from the freighter. We were on Channel 13, which is actually able to pick up 16 automatically. We were monitoring the correct channel. There was nothing that came across on the radio that they were bearing down on us. And, you know, a freighter horn is a freight train loud blast. Yet we heard nothing.

We got pretty worked up in the depositions. We couldn’t understand what was going on; couldn’t understand why this happened; couldn’t understand anything.

There was a mediator who tried to broker some kind of agreement. But you know, the freighter people were just standing firm in the case. They weren’t budging. And neither were we. We felt wronged.

Then something broke the log jam. Both sides were revisiting what had happened. We entered the Detroit River about 11:00 that day. The freighter entered the river at approximately noon. Their depositions stated a white trawler passed along their starboard side, crossed in front of them, then continued up the River. Then they spotted that white trawler loidy dooidying in the middle of the River. We realized they were first talking about that faster cruiser I mentioned earlier (the one that passed us too, just before I went below to rest), and then about our trawler, which was moving much slower. They saw the two boats as one and the same! So there was clearly confusion on the freighter between the actions of that white boat and our white boat.

But then, soon after that, the bow watchman was given permission to leave his watch to go get the next watch. That led to the “AHA” moment!

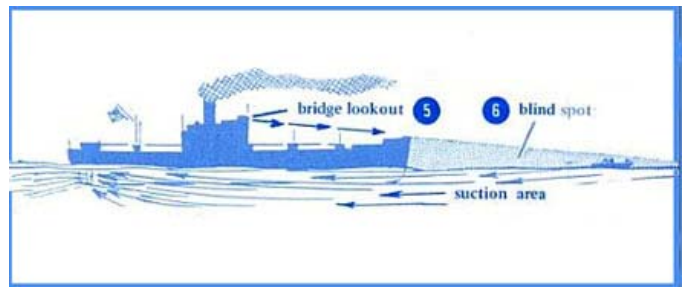
You know, freighters like the Gemini steer from behind. There comes a point where objects in front disappear from the vision of the bridge. The bow watchman, the bridge’s eyes for things near, had left his post. We then learned his replacement did not assume his post on the bow for several minutes. According to the deposition of the replacement bow watchman, when he stepped up to the bow and looked down, there we were, on the brink of getting rolled. The replacement bow watchman is the one who told the captain to “Full Stop.”

View From Rear Located Pilot House Of Large Freightier - Photo Courtesy [www.boatnerd.com](http://www.boatnerd.com)

And what about the others on the freighter? The ones who had



Image To Illustrate Where Gemini's Bow Watchman Is Located - Courtesy [www.boatnerd.com](http://www.boatnerd.com)



acknowledged seeing us loidy dooidying? Without the watchman keeping them apprised of our position, we believe they had simply stopped paying attention.

It was with that finding — the admission there had been a material gap in the bow watch — that the freighter company said “ok we’re just going to settle this.” They dropped the hard core.

I want to clarify something. It’s not like we felt the freighter people or their lawyers were trying to cover anything up. They were convinced their story was the story, and yet we knew it was incorrect. With their confusion regarding the two white boats, they saw us piloting haphazardly. But that wasn’t true. For 9 days we were pretty steady, 7-8 knots, 1800 rpm. In the Detroit River, we never varied course in a big way. And we never changed our



speed one bit.



*View From Rear Located Pilot House Of Large Freighter -  
Photo Courtesy www.boatnerd.com*

Since this accident, I've come to see freighters in a much more powerful light. Now, I don't know the hydrodynamic effect of a freighter's bow wave. But when we got caught in that, our boat being a very deep keel design, just spun in front of the freighter.



*Gemini's Enormous Bow Wave, Showing How Much Water She  
Pushes - Image www.boatnerd.com*

Perhaps if we were a smaller boat, or one with less keel, perhaps we would have just grazed along the freighter's side.

You know, we had a meeting with the owner of Mitzie's a convenience / gas dock business right on the Detroit River, just south of our collision spot. The dock at Mitzie's is where the paramedics looked after us before we went to the hospital. When we met, the owner was kind enough to return our flag to us, which had been found. (Incidentally, after the collision, he used debris from our boat to make up their bar!)

The reason I mention Mitzie's, is that the owner showed me something amazing when we were there... When a freighter goes by, the water level changes. A lot. The freighter displaces so much water, it pushes the level up before it, and then sucks it down when it passes. And once you get caught up in that...



*Mitzie's Convenience / Gas Dock Business Right On The Detroit  
River*

You know, I'm a pilot. It's kind of like getting caught in a down-draft. If the downdraft is 1,000 ft per minute and the most the plane can climb is 500 ft per minute, you're going down at 500 ft per minute, no matter how hard you pull up on the stick. I think that's what happened to us. Once we were in that freighter's pull, it became impossible to get out.



*Example Of Deep Keel On A 36' Grand Banks Classic  
Image Courtesy gbwoodies.com*

[ I discovered a very interesting article in a January 15, 1915 Scientific American called: Suction Between Passing Ships -1 -- Important But Little Understood Forces Affecting the Motion of Vessels. The article described and illustrated in diagrams the powerful forces that affect ships when they overtake and pass from opposite directions. It concluded with this paragraph: "For it is obvious that the forces created by these constrained waves following and preceding the ships can easily be far greater than any of those ordinarily relied upon for maneuvering. While the altitude of the constrained wave is slight its extent covers an area of ship side which is enormous when compared with the rudder surface. Indeed the



difficulty in connection with suction is not to explain it but to explain how it is that so many ships pass closely without its becoming an overwhelming factor. The most frequent answer is depth of water. It requires no mathematics to show that this Venturi like restriction of waterway between the two ships is much worse in shallow water than in deep.” As for Jeff’s Dad’s difficulty steering prior to impact, the article said this about a larger vessel overtaking a smaller one. “...the overtaken vessel suddenly swerving uncontrollably usually in defiance of a hard over helm and often against reversed engines,” though the article indicates the greatest suction occurs when the overtaking ship has mostly passed the other.] – Alex

[I also found this, from a book entitled Royce’s Sailing Illustrated, published in 1997. Regarding the dangers of ship waves, the book says: “The movement of a ship displaces a tremendous volume around and under this moving container at hull speed. It produces a suction 1/2 to 3 lengths ahead to fill the void created by the propeller suction near the stern. This suction increases considerably in shallow bays or rivers where the same total volume has to be pulled in from greater distances.” The section continues with this: “The large vessel bow wave may push your boat away...” So why didn’t it in this case? Perhaps Jeff’s deep keel theory in part explains that. Incidentally, seamen call the suction ships create between themselves and another object “the draw-down.”] – Alex

Interesting thing, in early 2005, just a few months after the accident, the Gemini was sold to Algoma Central for \$2.3 million. In maritime law, you can’t be sued for more than the value of your boat. I don’t know if Ashland sold it for that reason or not, but I think it probably capped their potential losses if the case ever resurfaced.



*Gemini Wearing Her New Name, Algosar - Image Courtesy  
www.boatnerd.com*

The settlement amount from Ashland Oil was a joke. Ashland may have viewed us as a thorn in their side, but they made it clear they were ready and tough if we were thinking of fighting this further. Auto-Owners recovered very little of the \$60,000 they had paid us. When we paid everybody off — paramedics, attorney, salvage — we ended up with less than \$20,000 each.

Now this was never about the money for us. We weren’t going for the throat. The insurance company had already pretty much reimbursed us. What we wanted was an explanation. We wanted to know “why.” And if there was some fault, we wanted an apology.

But you know, Ashland never admitted fault. My Dad and I have had 7+ years to reflect on what happened that day.

One thing that amazes me is had there been just one break, one break in the link of events that led to this accident, it wouldn’t have happened. For instance, had I stayed in the pilot house, with an extra set of eyes, maybe I’d have seen something the others never did.

Here’s something else I’ve reflected on a lot. While the Grand Banks is an excellent boat, there’s something to be said for having greater visibility from the pilot house. The whole center section of our pilot house was solid, because there were stairways at both ends. And on both sides, there were small windows. Those are some significant blind spots. And probably the freighter bore down on us in one of those spots. You know, when it came time to buy another boat, I insisted on a model that had greater rearward visibility. I wanted windows, big windows, all the way around. Some of those I looked at had absolutely no visibility behind them. That was not an option for me.



*Photo Of The Grand Banks 36' Classic Pilot House, Looking Aft -  
Note The Limited Rear Visibility.*



I've also wondered time and again how I survived this. I think the integrity of the Grand Banks played a huge role in that. The sides were 1" planked mahogany. The 4 stringers are of an especially hard wood; you have to pre-drill to put a screw in. It's dubbed "ironwood." I give credit to the strength of the boat. It held together until after it rolled. That's when the freighter punched us, on the opposite side of where I was sleeping. That integrity probably saved my life.

There have been consequences for my Dad and me that extend beyond boating. For months after the accident I could not stop sweating while sleeping. I would wake up in a cold sweat asking for air. I would be telling my wife to open the window, that there was no air. Even today, wherever I am, I need air circulating, always. And I need light when I sleep. I am also extremely claustrophobic now. I wasn't that way before. I can be down below in our own boat when we're at the dock, but when we're underway, I cannot be down there. It freaks me out.

You know, before the accident, my attitude was "life's an adventure and I'm going to live it." I was into a lot of things. Like flying. Ironically, I sold my plane to buy this boat with my Dad, because my Dad had been hounding me to give up flying. He kept telling me "with flying, there's no second chance." So I sold the plane, bought the Grand Banks, cruised at 7-8 knots, and then almost died. My attitude these days is far more cautious.

My Dad, to this day, can't get his confidence back. He's 73. He placed a lot of the blame for the accident on himself because he was at the wheel. He really took it hard. He won't go on our boat unless I'm there, but as long as I am, he still enjoys boating.

The big water quest left my Dad with this accident, but it didn't leave me. It took me 5 years to regain that. I came from piloting, you know? I love setting my course, navigating, having my systems. I want to make Hessel, I want to go to Mackinac Island, Charlevoix, Petoskey...

I got to a point where I wanted to get back up on the horse. Only this time, I wanted a boat that had visibility all around. I wanted a boat that was faster than freighters. And, I wanted one that was built strong like that Grand Banks. So I bought a Tollycraft. If you know anything about the Tolly's that's really what they are. Heavy, hand laid fiberglass. Made in the Pacific Northwest for those waters.

I bought my Tolly in Cedar Point (OH) marina. It was amazing getting it to Harsens Island (MI), up the Detroit River. Once again, my Dad came with me, along with my cousin. We had to pass by where the accident was. When we did, my Dad and I kind of looked at each other. We didn't say anything. But you know, I really had the attitude that we needed to move on; we needed to get past this. There's a raw steel factory to port. As I looked at it, I remembered that was the first thing I saw when I came up from the bottom that day. And I remembered hearing the ding-ding of a train noise. How could one forget?

What's ahead? Well, next Spring, my Dad and I are bringing the Tolly up to Hessel for the Summer. We love Hessel. We've found

it's a place where we can totally relax. It will be my second big trip.



*Jeff's and his Dad's 1988 Tollycraft  
Sport Sedan 34'*

So what have I learned from this experience?

For starters, when it comes to boat insurance, make sure your coverage includes the stuff you have with you on board. We were lucky Auto-Owners covered that. I'd also look for a clause which covers, at least in part, salvage costs. The bills from a costly salvage could really add to the hurt of a sinking.

Secondly, you know, I've seen videos of people riding freighter waves in boats or jet skis, or getting in close for photos or to sense the "bigness" of them. All of that is dangerous. The currents these boats generate are huge. And, as we learned, even from the bow they can suck you in. So, I would advise people who boat in big water, that freighters are to be kept at as great a distance as possible.

Thirdly – and this lesson is one that applies to all boaters at all times in any kind of boat in any body of water, big or small – never assume the guy in front of you, next to you, behind you, gaining on you, or falling back from you, sees you and is going to do the right or predictable thing. We assumed anyone bearing down on us would do the right thing and sound and/or call to state their intentions, just as they had the entire 9 days of our trip. That assumption nearly got us killed.

Another lesson worth sharing with novice boaters, or worth reminding experienced boaters, is closely related to this previous one. And that is, don't just look 180 degrees when you're on the water. Check, and keep re-checking, 360 degrees. It's called being a defensive boater. Learning this lesson the hard way has changed how I boat. I'm like the Exorcist. My head spins clear around all the time now.

Lastly, while I can't say this final point relates to the accident itself, it relates to the entire 9 day trip, and the navigational challenges, medical emergencies, and weather conditions we endured, some of which any boater can face. People make fun of others who fuss a lot about safety, who even obsess over it and won't go on the water without all their safety stuff. They call them wackos.

But you know, things happen very quickly on the water. Our near-tragedy is a good example of that.

So I would say to readers of this story, don't scrimp on safety. The one item, redundant device, or feature you scrimp on could be the one that makes the difference between life and death. If you've thought about buying a VHF, GPS, better radar, flare gun, stronger bilge pump, fume detector, lanyard kill switch, blower – anything safety-related, even a lowly first aid kit – just get it. I know the costs of safety stuff add up. And not using things that expire, such as flares, might seem like money wasted. But when the need arises, as it might with any of us, those items can become priceless.

No, though I always ensure kids do when they're aboard. I've thought about buying one of those self-inflating ones.

[I told Jeff I wear one of those. And I've found that in time, as with a seatbelt, one doesn't even mind, or notice, that it's on.] – Alex

You know, I'm on my way home right now. I'll be passing by a West Marine. I think I'm going to pick one up.

Jeff, thank you so much for sharing with us the incredible events of October 23, 2004 and its aftermath.

While you continue to try to find meaning in the accident, and continue to feel the emotional scars such a near-death experience

leaves behind, perhaps some good can come out of it through sharing this story.

Maybe it will touch people in a way that will make them safer boaters. Perhaps it will prompt them to pick up and wear a self-inflating life jacket, whether or not they are strong swimmers. Or prompt them to become, or help their family members become, better swimmers. It could trigger them to buy safety equipment they had, or had not, been contemplating. Or to take a boating safety course, or enroll their spouse or kids in one. Or maybe it will simply remind them to drive defensively, and to teach their kids not only how to drive a boat, but how to drive one defensively too.

In so doing, you're turning a painful event from the past into a positive one going forward; one that might even save lives.



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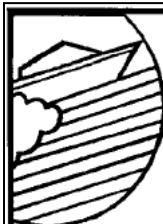
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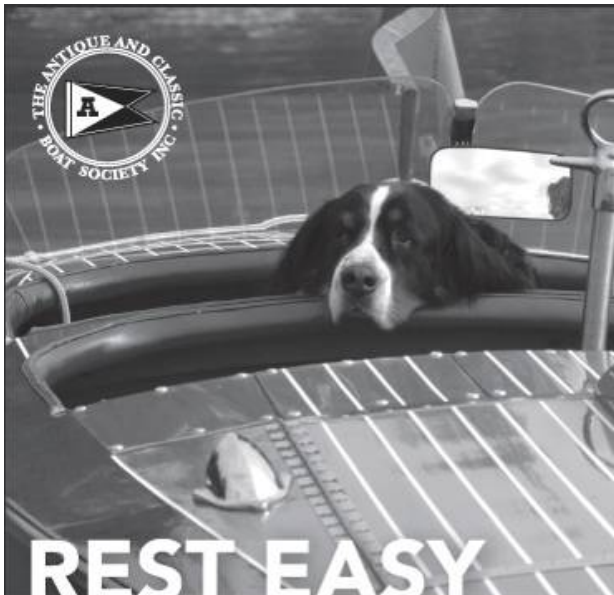
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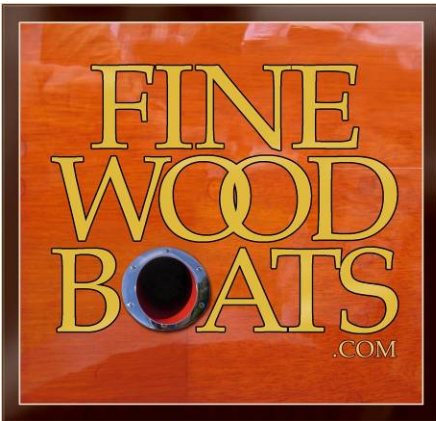
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September 28-30 Geneva Lakes Boat Show, Fontana, WI