



Nautical Musings

by Captain Stan Glatzer

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Boaters also fly. There are many of us that enjoy boating in places other than our home waters. Some of us deliver boats and fly one way in the process. One aspect of flying that is not included in the purchase of a ticket is the added expense of loss of baggage contents because of theft by airport personnel.

Who pays? We all are aware of the need for tight security concerning baggage at airports. Both carry-on and stowed baggage must be screened for potentially dangerous material; for this reason we are asked not to lock our checked baggage to enable the inspector to check any questionable object on the screen without holding up boarding and inconveniencing the passengers. These measures seem quite acceptable except when we arrive at our destination and find some items missing.

I was a victim of theft on a return flight from Florida on July 26, when someone helped himself to a brand new, leather, Greek fisherman's hat, with the sales tags still attached (value \$39). On my return from Jamaica on February 23, my traveling companion arrived home with eight (8) CD cases minus the CDs, which were packed in a zippered compartment in the baggage (value \$120). These losses may not be of large monetary value but are of personal worth, and entry of the baggage for illicit reasons leaves the owner with a definite sense of feeling personally violated.

Somehow there has to be a solution to this petty, and sometimes not so petty, theft that takes place when the baggage handlers do their job loading and unloading the plane. Security also includes the protection of the passenger's belongings. If the same handler can remove items, what prevents them from adding an item for smuggling or, worse, a potentially dangerous material?

If an inspector sees fit to open a piece of luggage, it should be noted on a tag attached to it, notifying the owner that the bag was indeed

opened. It should then be sealed with a tie to prevent further tampering since the baggage was cleared and does not have to be checked further. In the future I will lock my baggage with small, light-weight locks, and if security wishes to check the bag further, they will have my permission to cut the locks. If the locks have been cut, I will inspect the baggage prior to leaving the airport and make a claim for any loss. The probability of a baggage handler caught slashing a bag or found carrying a lock cutter on the job is remote since this is too blatant a move and his/her employment is threatened.

I do not have the answers, but I believe that if all those passengers with small losses do not accept them as an additional cost of flying and voice their concern with the insurance carriers, the airlines and the Homeland Security Department, some action might be taken to alleviate the situation.

When we are youngsters, or romantic lovers, we look at the heavens with wonder and offer flowery phrases dedicated to our love's eyes or ethereal soul. Those cruising on voyages spend countless hours gazing at these heavenly lights and are filled with a sense of being close to the Creator of such a spectacle. They even put these tiny dots in the sky to use and set a course by them, steering through the night with a particular star acting as a road sign to follow. Why, when we are at sea in the dark of night and the sky is filled with millions of stars for the offering, do we who boat in the bays and sounds along the coast ignore these wonders and give no thought to their spiritual, aesthetical or true navigational value.

Simple constellations or groups of stars allow for easy identification, for those educated in basic astronomy, of key stars that act as pointers. The North Star, known as Polaris, has been used to guide voyagers in the northern hemisphere for hundreds of years, a practice that has probably saved many lives. Recognizing Orion and his "Three Star

Belt" gives a stargazer the direction to shift his/her view to another part of the sky and locate Polaris. Other stars perform a similar service. For instance, find Cassiopeia and it points to Polaris. The mighty Big Dipper, also called the Big Bear or Ursa Major, and the Little Dipper, referred to as Ursa Minor, all help to locate the "life-saving" Polaris.

Navigating by GPS and Chart Plotters is fine and will definitely, when used properly and in working order, get you to your destination, but remember: the destination is only a small part of the trip. The voyage itself is where all the beauty and memories come from.

The 2005 boating season, except for those fishermen who were fortunate to take advantage of a banner catch, in general is not looked back on with fond memories by most recreational boaters. Serious sailors enjoyed many blustery days on the water, but the majority of boaters were kept off the water by the very same winds and the high price of fuel. The rise in the volume of boats for sale indicates that there are those who see "bad days a'comin." Most likely these are not boaters, but boat owners. True boaters have a wait and see attitude, a "We've been there before" attitude. For a skipper to say goodbye to a boat is like saying farewell to a way of life, a close friend, a sanctuary from the ordeals of every day living. No! I will not join the ranks of the despondent. I look forward to each season as the beginning of a new voyage. I expect Murphy to attempt to sink my seafaring nature, but the love of boating and the people I meet throughout my adventures are more than enough inspiration to "stand up and holler".

Let's all look forward with great expectations to a season that will give us memories to savor and friends to remember them with.

Capt Stan

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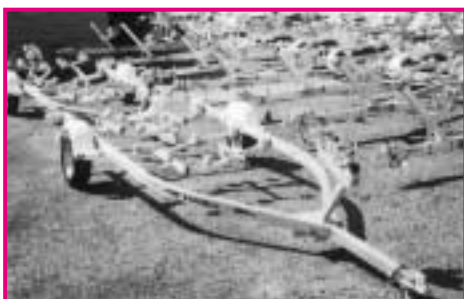
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