

NEVER TOO OLD

by P. J. Avenoso

I've always respected sailors. Let's face it; what other craft can you travel as far in as on a sailboat? You can circumnavigate the globe, and with no more fuel than, well, no fuel! The art of harnessing the wind in sheets, coupled with knowledge of the oceans' currents, provides you with enough natural fuel to make the journey. Due to these facts, sailors have maintained a special position in the boating world. They certainly do have a leg up on us stink-potters when it comes to the basic argument of sail over power. Gotta' give 'em that! Just don't get all high and mighty about it, OK? I don't mean to be picking on sailors, although one could argue, and cite case in point, that some sailors take the attitude to an extreme. But this is not about right or wrong, arrogant or mellow. Instead, I would like to explore the pastime of sailing.

Being a stink-potter for all of my almost 30 years of boating, I have come to grips with the "rights" of my fellow boaters with rags above their crafts. I try to be considerate of my wake, even if it means slowing my 20-ton craft to a no-wake speed, and then powering back up to my 12-knot cruising speed. I also provide a wide space, when possible, for the skipper to execute his tacking maneuvers. All in all, I find myself to be a respectful powerboater. I wish that I could say that about some of my fellow power boaters, for it is with dismay, and quite honestly disbelief, that I witness some of the most inconsiderate acts on the water. These boaters do not differentiate between sail or power; for that matter, they are, in my opinion, just ignorant, egocentric jerks. We have all seen them, young and old alike.

So then, let's get back to sailing. I have several friends and many acquaintances who are sailors. My only experience was 15 years ago when my then business partner bought a Hobie Cat. We went out on Great South Bay and spent as much time in the water as on the boat. I can tell you that it is not easy to right a turtled cat, nor was it easy to drag the cat to and from the water. (The wheels and other paraphernalia came later.) However, it was a rush when the sail caught wind and off we went, quite exhilarating. Another friend had a 20' something or other and he was always out sailing. I was tied up at Weeks Yacht Yard at the time living aboard and used to watch Larry and his son Steve putting down river for a few hours on the bay. He loved sailing as much as I loved cruising. Did I mention that I have a grandson?

One of the downsides, and there aren't many as far as I'm concerned, of owning a large boat, is short cruises. You have to cast off the lines, disconnect the dockside water, remove

the decorative items from the counters of the salon that could fall and break if wayward waves and wakes are encountered, and unplug from the dockside electric. Upon returning to port, the process has to be reversed, plus a fresh water wash down must be performed. When factored into a weekend cruise to a favorite port of call or gunk hole, this is of no consequence; however, for a shorty, to me it just doesn't seem worth the effort. So I got to thinking about how to remedy the situation because I like the short trips, whether it's to catch a sunset or just take advantage of a perfect weather situation after a day at the office. I like being away from the dock. The answer seemed obvious to me. We needed a smaller boat that was quick and easy to get out there. We're not ready to sell the "big" boat; therefore, a second boat was the answer. Did I mention that I have a grandson? Of course, the 1st mate didn't think we needed a second boat and she stated all the reasons. I guess I subscribed to them, because I have maintained being a single boat owner all these years.

My son was telling me that it was getting tiresome to socialize with his friends since they all had children and he and his wife did not. "All they talk about are their kids". Well, they eventually brought Alexandra Mae into the world, and guess what? All they talk about is their little girl, and all is well with their friends. The reason I share this with you is that the same dynamic happens with us grandparents. All we talk about is our grandchildren. I now fully understand the license plate holder that reads "Have I told you about my grandchild"? But more than talking about them, I find that I make life-altering decisions based on them. Some have to do with their well-being, such as funding their college, the toys that are more for me than them, and so on. This fact is never admitted to; however, all is justified by saying it's for Hunter. Oh, by the way, no hard feelings if you don't have grandchildren yet, find this boring and want to skip this story and read something else. I understand.

I figured that the big boat was the way to introduce him to boating, but it's out east and not readily accessible, plus all the things I previously stated. It's also too big to get the feel of being "on" the water. A small boat would be better. We'll keep it on the river by the house, I'll get off early and Hunter and I will go boating. What fun.

It just so happened that I was doing a job for Brookhaven Hamlet Marina when all these thoughts about Hunter and a small boat were swirling around in the grandchild section of my

continued on page 47

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