



The Daymarker

OCCOQUAN YACHT CLUB

P.O. Box 469, Occoquan, VA 22125

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COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

Tom Lensis

February on the Gulf Coast

While we had our boat in Stuart, Florida, for the winter we wanted to take full advantage of the boating opportunities and take trips to the Bahamas and the Gulf of Mexico. With our trip in January to the Bahamas now behind us, we planned a trip through St. Lucie Canal, Lake Okeechobee, Fort Myers and on to Sanibel Island and the Gulf of Mexico. From Stuart, Florida, it is only about 150 miles through the St. Lucie Canal, Lake Okeechobee, and the Caloosahatchee Canal to Fort Myers.

Day 1 - Wednesday

We left the Loggerhead Marina in Stuart up the St. Lucie Canal to make the St. Lucie Lock by the 9 am opening. Our plan today was to make it to the Loggerhead Marina in Pohokey, Florida, at Mile Marker 51 on the inside route. Lake Okeechobee has two marked routes. Route 1 takes you across the lake, and Route 2 takes you around the southeast shoreline. They both meet up at Mile 65 with the second route around the shore being about 10 miles longer.

The St. Lucie Lock on the eastern side and the Franklin Lock on the western side of Lake Okeechobee go to tidal waters and were only being opened every two hours on the odd hours. Lake Okeechobee has been experiencing a drought this past winter with water levels two feet lower than normal, so they didn't want to lower the water level of

the lake with additional lock openings. This made the timing to arrive at the locks very important or we would have had to wait two hours for the next opening.

We arrived at the lock at about 8:45 in plenty of time for the 9 am opening. Once in the lock, we had to hold onto long ropes to hold *Copy Cat* in place while they flooded the lock to raise us over eight feet to the water level on the other side. Donna was on the bow, and I was on the stern. We kept adjusting the lines to take up the slack while the water level was rising.

Once out of the lock, the canal took us through the center of the state, and we passed cattle swimming in the canal and had a few alligator sightings. Not much to see, just a lot of farmland. At Mile 38.9, we reached the Port Mayaca Lock, which opened on demand. We waited a few minutes while the lock had a couple of eastbound boats go through. Once in the lock, it only raised us by about two feet. Under normal circumstances with the lake at normal levels, we would have been raised about five feet.



Tom on the bow at Port Mayaca Lock

Once out of the lock and into Lake Okeechobee we turned to port to follow the markers for Route 2 along the shore. In the channel we only had about two feet of water under the boat, and we could see the waterline on the shore showing the lake levels were down. As we went along the southeast shore of the lake the depth of the channel got better, and showed five to six feet under the boat.

We arrived at the Loggerhead Marina in Pahokee at about 3 pm. With only a couple of boats in the marina, it had become a bird sanctuary. The docks were completely taken over by birds and were covered with bird droppings, which was not very pleasant. It was a real shame because the marina has state-of-the-art floating docks enclosed by a large cement breakwater (which many locals used to fish from) that would protect the marina from the open water of the lake. Once docked we went up to check out the facilities - everything was new and nice, but we found out they had only been open for three months. The restaurant and bar were also brand new, and they told us it is popular on the weekends. We had a beverage and snack, but ended up eating dinner on the boat.



Day 2 - Thursday

Donna and I set out around 8 am. We started at Mile 51 to try to make it to Fort Myers at Mile 135 in one day. We had three locks, four bridges and two railroad bridges

that we needed to go through. The route along the shore had a wide, well-marked channel, and we could make good time at 22 knots, only slowing down for the occasional fishing boat. Donna wanted some helm time, and I had trouble getting the helm back as she was enjoying piloting the boat.

The first bridge we came to at 9 am was the Torry Island swing bridge. We hailed the bridge on the VHF and, while we waited for the bridge tender, we could see a golf cart come up to the bridge. A young man jumped out of the golf cart with a long pole, inserted it in the middle of the bridge, and started running in circles pushing on the pole to manually crank the bridge open. This was the only bridge I'd ever seen where it was manually opened.

After the Torry Island Bridge, the next stop was Moore Haven Lock at Mile 78.4 out of Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee Canal. The lock was opened on demand, and we timed it perfectly and went right in. The lock didn't lower the boat at all because the lake level was so low, and we went through quickly. Next it was off to Ortona Lock at Mile 93.5. At 11:45 am we went through the Ortona Lock, and our next lock was the Franklin Lock, which only opened on the odd hours and

was 28 miles away. We knew we wouldn't make the 1 pm opening so we slowed the boat down to about 9 knots and just enjoyed the ride.

We arrived at the Franklin Lock about 15 minutes early for the 3 pm opening. This lock lowered us about 3 feet, and then we were on our way to Fort Myers Yacht Basin about 15 miles away. We tied up at about 5 pm. The temperature was about 80 degrees and partly cloudy, perfect weather for a short walk into downtown Fort Myers to find a restaurant for dinner. We ate at the Morgan House on the rooftop overlooking the town. The atmosphere was wonderful, and we had a great meal.

Day 3 - Friday

We stayed at the Fort Myers Yacht Basin to await the arrival of my parents, Dick and Claire



Tom's parents en route to Sanibel Island

Lensis, who drove down from their home in Sebring, Florida, to join us for a few days. They arrived at about 12:30 pm, just in time to venture over to Joe's Crab Shack on the water for lunch. The fresh mahi sandwiches were huge and very tasty. We decided to eat snacks on the boat for dinner since we had such a big lunch. We watched a glorious sunset as we sat on the bridge of *Copy Cat* and enjoyed a beverage or two.

Day 4 - Saturday

We headed out around 9 an en route to Sanibel Island. It was a short, pleasant ride across the bay. Weather was warm and mostly sunny. As we came out of the mouth of the river to head across to Sanibel Island, the fog rolled in from the Gulf of Mexico and reduced visibility to about 100 yards, so we had to turn on the radar and proceed slowly. By the time we reached Sanibel, the fog had lifted.

We arrived at Sanibel at 11:30. Our boat slip was a few steps away from the marina restaurant named Grandma Dots. We ate lunch there and then took bikes out for a ride around the island. We rode over to the public beach and the lighthouse to check it out.

Many people come to the area for one reason only – the incredible shelling. Fort Myers-Sanibel produces spectacular shells because the currents bring shells from the Caribbean to local shores. The wide continental shelf provides a gently sloping incline that allows many shells to arrive unscathed and the warm Gulf waters

provide ample opportunity for the creatures to reproduce. Locals refer to it as the Sanibel Slouch to describe beachcombers bent over looking for shells. Donna found a bucketful of shells and then bought a shell book to identify what they are. We lounged around the boat for the afternoon and then went to a nice restaurant called Jacaranda for dinner. The food and atmosphere were very good.

Day 5 - Sunday

Each morning the marina brings a newspaper and homemade blueberry muffins to the boat. Muffins and fresh peaches made up our breakfast that day. The parents decided to head back to Fort Myers after breakfast. We wanted to stay another day and then head over to Marco Island so it was more cost-effective and timely to send them back in a taxi.



Our "ferry" to Useppa Island

There was a couple in the boat slip next to us getting ready to head out and we chatted with them for a few minutes. They have a beautiful 48' Grand

Banks and offered to take us with them for a ride over to a private island called Useppa. You have to be a member of the island to even dock there. Useppa is located within the tropical isles of the southwest coast of Florida only a fifteen minute boat ride away from Sanibel. It is a beautiful island that is very lush and tropical and thick with foliage and huge trees. They have an inn with a terrific restaurant, and we ate lunch there with our new friends Barry and Judy. It was a great way to spend an afternoon and visit a new place.

Day 6 - Monday

We left Sanibel around 9 am for our 45-mile trip through the Gulf of Mexico and arrived in Marco Island and were tied up by 1:30. We docked on a T head next to the pool/grill area and across from the dockmaster. This marina only has a yacht club restaurant so the marina gave us a pass so we could eat there. Unfortunately it was only open one of the days we were there and just for lunch. We took the dinghy out and about and went over to the Snook Inn, which is a popular waterfront bar/restaurant with live entertainment. We took the dinghy in and around all the canals to get a look at the beautiful houses. One of the houses was under construction and had a water slide that looked like the ones they have on cruise ships.

Day 7 - Tuesday

We had lunch in the Yacht Club because they weren't open for dinner. Their bar is called the Burgee Bar so we could have given them an OYC burgee to put on display. We took the dinghy out again and went to the Esplanade Marina to check it out. We were told it was a great place to stay, but the guide talked about only having three feet of water through there and we were afraid to stay there - too bad because that was THE place to stay. Prices were comparable to Old Town Alexandria, but it is in a great location, in the middle of everything, and we were able to walk to a West Marine, liquor store, cigar store, and a grocery store all within a few blocks of the marina. There is a great bar overlooking the marina, along with a restaurant and lots of shops and galleries to wander around in. Oh, and there is plenty of water. It must have been a typo in the guide because there was 13-20 feet of water all the way into the marina. We saw lots of dolphins swimming around us.

Day 8 - Wednesday

We left around 9 a.m. headed into the Gulf for a 15-mile ride up the coast to Gordon Pass into the channel heading for Naples City Docks. After entering the channel we had about a three-mile trip north to Naples. This area is lined with waterfront mansions, one after another - beautiful waterfront homes, some as large as 35,000 square feet. The area is call Port Royal.

We weren't able to get a transient slip, but they had a fishing boat that was out for repairs and they let us dock there. That was entertaining because we had lots of people who wanted to charter our boat and many remarked on how nice our "fishing boat" was compared to the other fishing boats.

Our friend and fellow OYC member, Dan Carr, has a sister who lives in Naples. They picked us up and gave us the grand tour of the area. As luck would have it, their son and his wife own a very nice wine store called "Decanted." We visited there and tried several of their wines. They specialize in boutique wines, and they had some great wines and great values. We brought some extra wine while we were there - you can't have too much - and have since purchased several cases from them. They also ship to Virginia.

Day 9 - Thursday

We were on our own today to wander around downtown Naples. We forgot to take a map with us, but managed to find the infamous "Fifth Avenue," which has lots of high-end shops and a horde of restaurants to choose from. Later on we got carryout pizza from a place close to the marina and ate on the boat. It went very well with some of our new wine!

Day 10 - Friday

We left Naples City dock at 7:30 am. Anticipating three-foot seas in the morning, we wanted to get an early start. It was a lot smoother than we thought it would be, and we arrived back at Fort Myers at 1 pm. We went back into town for dinner, then called it an early night so we could get up early for the long return trip.

Day 11 - Saturday

We left at 7 am to make the 9 am opening of Franklin Lock. We had to wait 30 minutes for the lock opening. We went through Ortona Lock at 11:15, which was on demand, and reached Moore Haven Lock around 12:15 and got right in since it was already open. Water temp was 80 degrees with partly cloudy skies, and air temp was in the mid-70s. We arrived back at Loggerhead Marina on Lake Okeechobee at 3 pm and requested a slip with less bird droppings. I think they may have attempted to clean up the dock a bit for us, but it was still less than desirable.

Day 12 - Sunday

We left before 7 am and the first lock was open. No change in water level, so it opened right up for us. We hauled butt to get to the next lock before 9 am, about 20 miles away, and made it in the nick of time. After that it was smooth sailing to our slip in Stuart, and we arrived at the fuel dock at 11 am.

We would highly recommend this trip to anyone in the club. Maneuvering through the locks was not as easy as we originally thought it would be. It was work holding the boat in place while the locks were being flooded, but after going through a few of them, we felt like experts. You don't have to worry too much about the weather. Most of the trip was through well-protected water and the navigation was easy to follow in well-marked channels with plenty of water.

Tom Lensis, *Copy Cat*



Vice Commodore

Tom Plewes

So What Are Those Placards All About?

Last month we touted the U.S. Power Squadron/U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Vessel Examination Program. Well, the *Double Eagle* had its annual going-over on May 15 and passed, and once again it was a learning exercise for this captain. I learned that the mandatory backfire flame control is tucked up under the air intake

and that it is in close proximity to a very dirty air filter. I discovered another item to note and get fixed.

And once again, I had to scratch my head and try to remember where those two darned mandatory placards are hidden so the examiner could eyeball them. This time I chanced to actually read them. They are not the most exciting reading in the universe of things to read, but a couple of words caught my attention, among them "substantial criminal penalties" and "criminal sanctions including fines and imprisonment." These warnings are even stronger than the warnings on our pillow tags (we never remove them for fear of the tag police) and the pirating warnings on our Blockbuster DVD rentals.

The Pollution Control Placard, required on boats 26 feet or longer, reads something like: Discharge of Oil Prohibited. The Federal Pollution Control Act prohibits the discharge of oil or oily waste into or upon the navigable waters of the U.S. if the discharge causes a film or discoloration of the surface of the water or causes a sludge or emulsion beneath the surface of the water. The law says the 5x8" placard should be placed in a conspicuous place in each machinery space (a-hah, that's where we should look). The fine? Up to \$5,000. That tends to get your attention.

The other placard is the "MARPOL" trash placard, sometimes called the garbage placard. It too is required on boats 26 feet or over in length. These placards are a little bit bigger (at least 4" X 9" in size with letters at least 1/8 inch high). Among other things, they must say: The discharge of plastic or garbage mixed with plastic into any waters is prohibited, and the discharge of all garbage is prohibited in the navigable waters of the U.S. and, in all other waters, within 3 nautical miles of the nearest land [That certainly includes the Potomac and its tributaries.]. The fines are pretty hefty – a civil penalty of up to \$25,000, a fine of up to \$50,000, and prison for up to five years for each violation. Just think - five years of hard time for tossing over that empty soda can.

What is this placard stuff all about? It's international law, coming from a convention called "Marpol 73/78" - the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships, 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978. ("Marpol" is short for marine pollution and 73/78 short for the years 1973 and 1978). This is important stuff, and was designed to minimize pollution of the seas, including dumping, oil, and exhaust pollution.

The objective is simple: to preserve the marine environment through complete elimination of pollution by oil and other harmful substances and to minimize accidental discharge. First Mate and I will try harder to remember where the cards are posted. They are well worth reading and heeding because they put teeth into what all good OYC members do – preserving our water resources here in the Chesapeake Bay waters.

Tom Plewes, *Double Eagle*



Rear Commodore

John Heinze

**The Fajita Fest
Saturday, June 11, 2-5 pm
Occoquan Harbour Marina (picnic area)**

Once again, we are going to have a great time!

At OYC we have a lot of great cookouts and fix-your-own events, but last year we thought we would try something new. And so last year was the first year for something completely different – the Fajita Fest. For one price, we provided it all – food and beverages – and not just the usual sodas and bottled water but also your favorite drinks that go with Mexican food. And it was so much fun that there was no question that we would be doing this event again this year.

So once again OYC is providing the Fajita Fest! You will not need to bring anything to this OYC event. All you have to do is tell us if you are coming, so we have enough on hand for everyone.

And the food will be fantastic – chicken and beef fajitas with all the fixings (prepared as last year by El Charro restaurant, known for its authentic and delicious Mexican food), plus dessert. Yum!

The cost for all of this is a very reasonable \$15 per person. All you will have to do is tell us in advance if you are coming so we have enough food and beverage for everyone. Please give me a call **(703-888-3837) with your reservations. The deadline for reservations is noon on Thursday, June 9th.** Come and enjoy the Fajita Fest!

John Heinze, *Great Escape*



Secretary

Jill Stanley

Trip to Mallows Bay

With the price of gas being what it is, Steve and I are trying to plan some trips on the boat that don't require a lot of distance. One such trip is to Mallows Bay. We plan to go in May, weather permitting, with a few other boats from FYC. We missed this trip last year and have been invited again to participate in this little adventure.

Steve and I pass Mallows Bay on the way to and from Aquia Creek where we keep our boat for the winter. It's a beautiful little bay with a lonely sunken ship. It is said that there are many sunken ships below the murky water. The bay is surrounded by beautiful trees and vegetation. We plan to take our kayaks and explore this ghostly fleet and maybe do a little fishing to boot. I just hope the water will be clear so that we might see some of these great hulks beneath the water. One never knows what can be found in such a sunken graveyard.

For those who don't know the history of Mallows Bay, there is an interesting story. It holds the largest graveyard fleet in the Western Hemisphere. This all started with the First World War when the United States built 285 wooden-hulled ships to help carry cargo to Europe. Out of the 285, only 264 were ever placed in operation. These ships were soon taken out of commission when the diesel engine appeared, making these coal burning vessels obsolete. In 1922, 233 of the fleet were sold to the Western Marine and Salvage Company (WM&SC), an Alexandria firm, for scrapping.

WM&SC towed the ships from the James River, where they had been mothballed, to Alexandria, Virginia. In Alexandria, WM&SC planned to remove the machinery to be used for scrap; the hulls would then be burned and dragged into a nearby anchorage. WM&SC originally wanted to sink these vessels in a marsh and bury them beneath dredged spoil, but the local watermen protested. WM&SC then purchased 566 acres of farmland off Mallows Bay, and the hulls were then towed to the bay.

The watermen again began to protest. WM&SC was forced to move quickly, and early on the morning of November 7, 1925, they set fire to the decks of 31 ships. With this having been done, WM&SC proceeded to bring a total of 169 ships to Mallows Bay. WM&SC eventually went bankrupt, leaving the hulls for future scavengers to gather the scrap metal. By 1934 an industry of its own sprung up along the shore lines of Mallows Bay. There were a dozen independent salvors that picked over the hulls of the fleet. The story goes that there were at least five floating brothels and around 26 illegal stills erected nearby. Sounds like they had quite a party going on!

During the Second World War, the government got into the picture to try and salvage 20,000 tons of the iron from 110 of the hulls. The government hired Bethlehem Steel to do this job, which proved to be too costly. So this project was scrapped! Over the years there were projects to try and clean up the bay by removing the hulls. It was determined that removing them would be more damaging than helpful. Over the years the wrecks had become part of the environment and hosted their own natural habitats.

In 1993 a program to identify and record the vessels that now lay in the bay was formed. They have recorded 88 wooden ships, a seagoing car ferry named *Accomac*, 12

(cont. from p. 5)

barges, a possible Revolutionary War longboat, several 19th century log canoes, schooners, and a North Carolina menhaden boat. Of the 285 wooden steamships from World War I, at least 152 ended in Malloys Bay. So as you can see Malloys Bay has quite a history with ships dating from the late 18th century through the 80s.

I have only given you a tip of the iceberg on the real story. If you are interested in learning more, check out the *Ghost Fleet of Malloys Bay* by Donald G. Shomette. It's a fascinating tail.

Jill Stanley, *'bout Time*



Treasurer

Arleen Rhodes

Wine Does Not Float

This past weekend I witnessed a serious case alcohol abuse while out on the river. I will not reveal the names of persons involved as it would embarrass Harry and Laslo. This all started with a drive-by in the middle of Occoquan Bay. One of the passengers in the drive-by boat realized that an unnamed party on a drifting boat owed them a bottle of wine from a previous event. Why Harry had to borrow the wine in the first place was unknown and why he had not repaid the loan in a timely fashion are two good questions to ask. The unnamed person's wife went below and retrieved what looked like a nice bottle of wine (to which Harry said, "Not that good one") and we prepared to make the transfer.

Boat One ("transferer") was drifting and Boat Two ("transferee") was under power. While the captain expertly maneuvered the boat close enough for the pickup, Harry decide that he couldn't wait that long and so aimed to underhand toss the said bottle of "good" wine to Boat Two. I recall a few remarks such as "no, don't do it" or something like that, but the toss was made. The catch was attempted and yet a fumble ensued which resulted in the bottle of wine hitting the water and sinking immediately to the bottom. There was not a hint of any floating action, just a straight dive to the bottom of the river.

The alcohol abuse aside, the question still remains as to whether the debt was actually paid or whether a bottle is still owed. This, I am sure, will be debated for weeks to come, and I will update the club if there is ever a resolution.

Arleen Rhodes, *Impulse*

Huge Turnout for OYC Memorial Day Cruise to Colonial Beach



Memorial Day = SUMMER! What better way to start a cruise than competing drink delivery! After a smooth ride down the river on Friday afternoon, we were met by PC Joe Livingston (who arrived the day before and was technically "first") with gin and tonics... I quickly got the blender going for our Coordinator Margaritas, so arriving boats had their choice.

Within a few hours we had over a dozen boats - Gail Lynn, Sea Duck Too, Copy Cat, Time



Away, Sandra Louise, Bay Dreamer, Touch of Fate, Hot Schatz, Impulse, Forever Dreamin', Island Passage, Makia III, Bout Time and Emma Caroline II (with Just Chillin', Daddy's Harley, and High Cotton arriving Saturday, plus the Harris family by land yacht) - set up for a huge happy hour.

Luckily the storm from the cold front that downed trees back home bypassed us except for some sudden winds, but we managed to rescue chairs and food just in time. After a dinner "on your own" there appeared to be some loud cackling among a crowd of guys aboard *Impulse*, but they aren't saying what the subject was.... There was also the first contestant for the Golden Snorkel award; evidently the step from *Bay Dreamer* to the dock was too much for our Commodore!

We're saving the rest of the story and more pictures for the July issue!

Rick & Teresa Sorrenti, *SEA DUCK TOO*

The Datemarkers

New Members

- Ryan and Sabrina Waters of Woodbridge. They keep their Sea Ray at Tyme-n-Tyde Marina.
- William and Kim Akers of Springfield. They keep their Sea Ray, *MORGAN JANE II*, at OHM.

June Birthdays

6/2	Karen Crouch
6/5	Bill French
6/6	Chet Hahne
6/8	Steve Bell
6/9	Myndi Harbin
6/10	Judy Dooley
6/11	Goodwyn Morgan
6/12	Timothy Gibbons
6/15	Steven Quentmeyer
6/15	Mary Jo Worcester
6/16	Steven Thompson
6/19	Kim Akers
6/19	Donna Carr
6/27	William Myers
6/28	Bill Hamp
6/29	Janet Jeirles

June Anniversaries

6/1	Bill & Vicki Hamp
6/1	Tom & Donna Lensis
6/2	William & Sandra Myers
6/4	Christian & Alison Rose
6/5	Joey & Pam Sowell
6/6	Bill and Beth Francis
6/9	Al & Helen Curtis
6/15	Duane & Janet Jeirles
6/15	Bob & Jan Wilcox
6/19	Nabil & Lucy Dubraque
6/20	Joe & Gail Livingston
6/21	Steve & Mary Jo Worcester
6/22	Bill & Peggy Johnson
6/23	William & Kim Akers
6/25	Kris Butera & Ralph Mason



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Scenes from the 2011 OYC Flag Raising



Grillmasters of the OYC Flag Raising -
John Heinze & Ned Rhodes

Take a Gamble on the Atlantic City Cruise

Dates: July 17-27

Cruise Coordinator: Mike Crouch, *Makia III*

Phone: 703-497-4674

The Float-In at Coles Point will merely be a "warm-up" for this festive run up the Chesapeake Bay, through the C&D canal, down the Delaware Bay, around Cape May, and a short run up the Jersey coast to Atlantic City. Total time from Coles and back to the Occoquan is just shy of two weeks (you can stay longer). Likely destinations include Tilghman Island, Chesapeake City, Cape May, Atlantic City, Rehoboth Beach, Herrington Harbor, and Corinthian Yacht Club. Figure we'll spend a full three days in the Atlantic City area...plenty of time to win, win, win!

Fajita Fest at OHM
June 11, 2-5 pm
John Heinze
703-888-3837
(RSVP BY JUNE 9TH)

PRYCA @ Cobb Island
June 17-19
Pat Croft
703-451-9147

Lower Bay & Dismal Swamp
June 19-July 2
Harry Croft
703-451-9147

Tim's I Fireworks Raftup
June 25
Bud & Heidi Bishop
703-455-9776

National Harbor Fireworks
July 3-5
Steve Quentmeyer
703-878-2336

Washington Channel Fireworks
July 4-5
Jim Dooley
703-850-2888

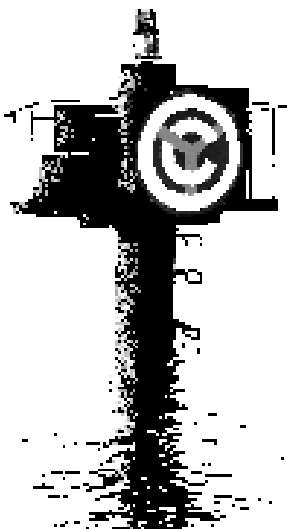
Inside this edition...

**Don't miss the Fajita Fest on June 11th!
RSVP by June 9th!**

**Wine Overboard! There's a missing
uncorked bottle at the bottom of
Occoquan Bay. Only ONE, you say??**

**What's the meaning of MARPOL
anyway?**

**Summer is heating up, and OYC is
already back on the water in big
numbers. Send the Editor your
pictures, and be famous!**



The Daymarker

**Occoquan Yacht Club
P.O. Box 469
Occoquan, VA 22125**

**Change Service
Requested**