



The Daymarker

**2009 & 2011 PRYCA Cup Champions
OCCOQUAN YACHT CLUB**

P.O. Box 469, Occoquan, VA 22125

Member: PRYCA, CBYCA; Boat U.S. Accord #GA80979Y

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COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

Tom Lensis

Dead Reckoning Versus Dead-on Positioning

It doesn't seem that long ago that I was traveling down the Potomac River on my way to Solomon's Island by way of the Rte. 301 Bridge in my 1987 27' Sea Ray Sundancer and entered the fog rolling up the Potomac River from the south. It was early July in the summer of 1989 and the only navigation equipment I had on board was a compass, depth finder, and VHF radio. It only takes one time of wandering out of the channel and dinging a set of props to know the importance of having the proper navigation charts and using them.

The navigation in those days was good old fashioned dead reckoning, an art of calculating speed, following a magnetic course heading from a known position on the chart and using the depth finder to help verify your position. Back then I would travel at almost idle speed of about six knots in low visibility, plot a magnetic course from buoy to buoy, check my depth finder, and compare it to my chart. I would make corrections to the left or right, of course, to allow for the wind and hopefully make it to the next buoy. In low visibility and during the night, navigation was a real challenge. Wow, that dead reckoning was a lot of work.

Most smaller pleasure boats of the day were not equipped with radar or the electronic navigation of the day, a Loran-C receiver. Most Loran-C receivers would take land-

based radio signals and convert them to latitude and longitude so you could convert to a standard nautical chart with about a ¼ nautical mile accuracy. Not very good compared to the GPS of today that measures within a few feet of accuracy.

Fast forward some 22 years to 2011 - just about every vehicle known to man and man himself are equipped with some form of GPS. There are handheld units, smart phones, and in-dash mounted GPS receivers. The mariner today has a wide variety of reasonably priced navigational tools at his disposal.

Recently I did a lot of research on marine GPS receivers because my Raymarine and Northstar GPS units were somewhat dated and required extensive database subscriptions every year. On our recent trip this past fall and winter to Florida, Bahamas, and the Gulf of Mexico, these older units needed many database cards to cover the large territory. I wanted an easy-to-use GPS that had the entire area database for our planned southern cruising; and the ability to get updated satellite weather radar, sea conditions, wave heights, tide information, and weather buoy information, as well as satellite radio. I also wanted satellite image overlay similar to Google maps. One additional satellite image card is the only extra card needed for the entire area that we cruised. The extra card also gives an aerial view and all the pertinent information of just about every marina, which comes in handy when approaching a new marina for the first time. All of this I wanted to be networked with my current equipment, autopilot, and a 12-inch color touchscreen display. What a long way we have come in navigational tools since the late 1980s.

(cont. on p. 2)

I decided on a Garmin 7212 GPS. I found that this unit has the ability to auto-plot your course directly from your current position to where you want to go. All you have to do is preprogram what safe depth your vessel needs, and the GPS will automatically calculate your course. It will ask you to check the course for accuracy, just to make sure you check the course, and plot it against a current chart of the area you want to cruise. Once underway, you can couple it to your autopilot and it calculates an ETA based on your vessel's speed and will continue to update as your speed changes. It can be programmed to pass buoys on either the port or starboard side. Additionally, it has superimposed satellite Doppler radar images so you can keep track of any approaching weather. For the satellite weather and radio, you need to subscribe to XM Radio for each. That is extremely good information to have anytime you are on the water and don't want to have a bad experience being stuck in bad weather. On our way back up the ICW in April, we tracked a storm coming up behind us and were able to stay ahead of it. Additionally you can add your depth finder, radar, infrared cameras, and much, much more.

Even when using your GPS it is always a good idea to have the proper navigational charts with you so you can follow along verifying your course using dead reckoning with the GPS, especially if you are cruising in unfamiliar waters. If you make a habit of following along with paper charts you won't find yourself in trouble when that trusty GPS unit fails - and believe me they do fail. Nevertheless, technology has come a long way in the past 22 years and significantly helps to make boating safer and more fun.

Tom Lensis, *Copy Cat*



Vice Commodore

Tom Plewes

Fall is the Best Season to Cruise

I'll bet if you ask a smattering of OYC cruise enthusiasts the question, "When is the best season of the year to cruise?" you will get at least three different answers. Only the most hearty will confess that they like to cruise best in the winter, though we do get a representation of OYC members showing up for the Hearty Souls cruise to National Harbor in November and the Santa Cruise into Occoquan in December each year. Some will say spring, when the vessel is newly outfitted and commissioned and the sap is running. Others will say summer, when warm weather makes for favorable cruising conditions and fun times at interesting destinations. Still others, including First Mate and I, will

lay claim on the fall season, when the temperature is no longer in double digits, the air is crisp and clean, and the water and destinations are less crowded. Fortunately OYC has cruises and activities in all seasons.

Yes, I know that the official beginning of fall is September 23 this year, when we hit the autumnal equinox and when day and night each are about 12 hours long and the sun crosses the equator going southward. But we like to pretend that fall starts right after Labor Day, having to do with more practical things like the beginning of the school year and the Redskins season, not celestial stuff.

This fall again there is an active OYC cruise schedule. The first cruise is up to Washington to see a **Washington Nationals game on September 17-18** against the Marlins. The game starts at 7:05 p.m. The cruise will use the James River Marina on the historic Anacostia River, just a short walk on a new and safe path to the stadium. The cruise is being coordinated by Mike Crouch.

The long-scheduled trip to National Harbor for the Oktoberfest celebration on September 23-25 is, as this article was being written, a bit up in the air. It seems that the National Harbor Marina is under new management which strongly prefers long-term slip rentals to transient slips, and only a few slips are available. Don Bennett is working out options with those OYC members who expressed an interest in this cruise. We will keep a close watch on how this new policy at National Harbor will affect our schedule for next year. It is not expected to play havoc with plans for the annual **Hearty Souls Cruise scheduled for November 11-13** as many slips will have been vacated by then.

After the annual highlight of the fall season for OYC – the **Shrimp Fest at Hoffmasters on October 1** - Rick and Teresa Sorrenti will lead a group from OYC to participate in the **PRYCA End-of-Summer Cruise to Colonial Beach on October 7-9**. Last year this cruise was to Aquia Harbor.

The not-to-be missed **Octoberfest/Chili Cookoff/Election at the Fairfax Yacht Club on Saturday, October 22**, will top off the fall season. The passing of the annual Oktoberfest/Chili Cook off/Election and the Hearty Souls Cruise is a signal to OYC members that it is time to check and make sure that formal clothes still fit prior to the **Holiday Party and Change of Watch on December 8**, and to pull down the *Guide to Cruising Chesapeake Bay* to start planning the 2012 cruising season.

Now you can see why fall is our favorite time of the year for cruising with OYC!

Tom Plewes, *Double Eagle*



Rear Commodore

John Heinze

Farewell Cookout for Ned and Arleen Rhodes

Over 65 people, OYC members, and even a PRYCA guest or two, turned out to say farewell to Ned and Arleen Rhodes on a warm and muggy Sunday afternoon at Occoquan Harbour Marina on August 7.

The large turn out - certainly one of our largest for a cookout - is not surprising as Ned and Arleen are long-time, very active members who have made many contributions to the club over the years. They have been cruise coordinators on many cruises, including the annual Hardy Souls cruise. Both have served on the Board more than once. Ned is a past commodore and has served as webmaster for the club, a position that he has filled since the website began. Arleen most recently served as treasurer when that position became vacant in mid-term.

And that is just some of their official duties. Their unofficial duties seem to be...well, it seems that they have made a heck of a lot of friends over the years.

The party started at noon with hamburgers and hot dogs expertly prepared by Commodore Tom Lensis, who deserves a battlefield citation for fighting the heat index from the sun and propane grill. OYC members generously contributed numerous side dishes so that even though the attendance exceeded expectations, we were in no danger of running short of great food.



Laslo Bozoky, Arleen Rhodes, & Ann Bennett

OYC Historian Nabil Dubraque once again showed his creativity by providing a video collage of Ned and Arleen's OYC adventures over the years. He provided a DVD of the video to Ned and Arleen, who seemed relieved to learn that they now had the only copy.

Wonder what they intend to do with it? Too late, we've all seen it!

First Mate Rebecca Heinze provided a photo album, as Ned is well known for the prize-winning cruise photos he has taken. Hopefully there will be many more photos to share. Rick Sorrenti provided special "clean up" bags made just for Ned, which he seemed to appreciate. Barbara Freedman presented several presents with a bacon theme, as Ned claims to want bacon in everything. With Barbara's help, he nearly got it. On behalf of the club, OYC Commodore Tom Lensis presented Ned and Arleen with a gift certificate to West Marine. Members also signed an OYC burgee and an oversized going-away card.

There was chocolate cake provided by the club, plus lots of other desserts, and it seems many people stayed around most of the afternoon despite the heat. Indeed, some stayed well into the evening. No one wanted it to end, and everyone wanted the chance to say:

Farewell Ned and Arleen – you will be missed.



One final note. After the party, first mate Rebecca Heinze sewed the OYC burgee with all the signatures onto a pillow for Ned and Arleen to keep on their boat. The pillow was presented to them at the final Board meeting that they attended on August 10.

John Heinze, *Great Escape*



Secretary

Jill Stanley

Safety Advice from a New Member

In my last article for the *Daymarker*, I interviewed Teri Miller for my new member column. As I was talking to Teri, I asked her what she thought was one of the most exciting experiences to happen to her while boating. Teri came up with a surprising answer. She looked at me

and stated that this was not what she would call an exciting experience, but it sure was a real eye-opener.

Early this spring on a very cold and rainy day, she and Scott took their Silverton to Hoffmaster's to get a safety inspection and visit some friends. As they were leaving the dock to go back to Belmont Bay Marina, Teri - being the first mate - was on the bow of the boat catching the bow lines as they were being tossed to her. There is a step on the bow, and somehow she missed the step and fell headfirst into the cold water.

Luckily she was not hurt, but because of that incident, Teri does not go to the bow without wearing a life jacket. To this day Teri still cannot figure out how it happened. She does not want to take the chance again for another mishap like this without being prepared. After talking to Teri, I realized what good advice this would be for all first mates to heed. We put on our seatbelts in the car; putting on a life jacket to work on the bow of the boat is not such a bad idea either I have found that as I have grown older my balance isn't what it used to be. One never knows when a mishap will happen. Being prepared is better than being sorry.

Jill Stanley, *'bout Time*

Wanted: Lighthouse Photos



Please collect any photos you have of you, your boat, or your dog with a lighthouse background. We need these for the December Holiday/Change of Watch party. Please identify the lighthouse, and e-mail the photos to Liz Plewes at ehplewes@aol.com or send them to her at 4510 Banff Street, Annandale, VA 22003.



Nautical Bulletin Board

Have a nautical item looking for a new home? Send a brief description to oyceditor@gmail.com by the 20th of each month for the next issue. Items from OYC members only. Published items and length of description at editor's discretion.

The Datemarkers

New Members

- Marty & Karen Joyner who keep their Chaparral in Belmont Bay.
- Steve & Ginny Preda, who keep their Maxum *Anamchara* at Quantico Yacht Club.

Birthdays

9/6 Patricia Maxwell	9/16 Ginny Preda
9/10 Barbara Freedman	9/17 Brian Bryant
9/11 William Akers	9/17 Ralph Mason
9/12 Mary Ann Schall	9/19 Teri Miller
9/15 Marty Joyner	9/22 Bob Stegon
9/15 Scott Miller	9/27 Mike Crouch
9/16 Tom Lensis	

Anniversaries

9/3	Joseph & Diane Ward
9/4	Bud & Heidi Bishop
9/5	Allen & Lynanne Jorsey
9/8	Terry & Trish Mattke
9/11	Bob & Betsey Nalevanko
9/12	Dick & Caroline Lynn
9/16	Steve & Carolyn Bell
9/20	Bud & Judi Jennison
9/20	Bob & Nancy Stegon
9/21	Patricia & Carl Maxwell
9/25	Daniel & Donna Carr

TRIP REPORT: Aquia Harbor Dog Days of August



Karen and I attended the Aquia Harbor Yacht Club (AHYC) sponsored Dog Days of August over the first weekend in August. Too much fun – which is typical. AHYC is virtually at the head of the navigable portion of Aquia Creek. For those who haven't made the trip, you're missing out on taking a step back in time – think of the jungle boat ride at Disneyland.

After you pass the rail trestle (in the vicinity of Hope Springs), the creek narrows significantly and the ubiquitous lily pads seem to crowd your boat into a channel not much wider than your transom. The vegetation overhangs much of the creek, and the water vacillates in depth from a few feet (Austin Run) to over 15 feet. As you follow a serpentine course (many chart plotters simply give up in terms of a graphic presentation), you stumble upon Aquia Harbor after about 45 minutes. You're amazed this many boats, many in the 40'+ range, could make it this far back.



Search for "Occoquan Yacht Club" on Facebook and click "Request to Join" (OYC members only). Web space for occoquanyachtclub.org, potomacriveryachtclubs.org, and ormaweb.org is donated by Software Systems Group, Ned Rhodes, President and CEO.

First and foremost, Team AHYC puts on a first-class event – for men and women. We arrived Friday night and loaded up on “relatively” inexpensive diesel @ \$3.91/gallon (who would have thought one could get giddy about prices below \$4.00?). Then we slipped the boat at their new docks. The maker of the docks is the same company used by Fairfax, and you all know they’re wonderful compared to the previous docks. That evening we went up to the club for libations and ultimately hung out at the dock with others until after....

Saturday brought boat rides around an adjacent island in the creek, followed by a walking tour of Government Island. Government Island is an historic site, approximately a mile from the marina, where they quarried granite for many famous buildings (e.g., the White House) in Washington, D.C. Early afternoon brought games (non-competitive), and we spent the afternoon at the community pool located adjacent to the marina. The marquee event was the crab and shrimp dinner. The crab were piled a “mile high” – honest. At least 40 folks assaulted said crab for hours, and when all was said and done. there had to be at least three bushels left! We ended up going back to the pool after dinner and then drifted over to a DJ-hosted dance.

On Sunday morning AHYC hosted a mega-brunch before folks made their way home. We ended up hanging around until early afternoon just socializing.

Mark this one on your calendar for next year. It rivals other PRYCA-sponsored events but in a different way – much more relaxing with the same great company in a natural setting.

Mike Crouch, *Makia III*

TRIP REPORT: The South Bay-Dismal Swamp Adventure Cruise



19 days, almost 600 miles, 845 gallons of fuel, and a priceless boating experience! It is hard to describe this long cruise in any terms other than superlatives. The weather was delightfully warm, the seas mostly calm, and the boat crews, definitively exceptional.

Cobb Island

The cruise began with the fun at Cobb Island, June 17, and then moved on to White Point Marina on the Yeocomico River on June 19. Five boats formed the core cruising group that went the full distance: *'Bout Time* (Steve and Jill Stanley); *Takin' It Easy* (Randy and Susan Willetts); and *Bay Dreamer* (Harry and Pat Croft, along with their guests Dave and Linda Nelson); *Déjà vu* (Kevin and Pam Bell); and *Sea Duck, Too* (Rick and Teresa Sorrenti). *Party Time* (Ralph Mason and Kris

Butera) hung in there with us for the first week - from Cobb Island to White Point, to Bay Creek, and finally to Smithfield - but when the rest of the group headed for Portsmouth to begin the journey further south, Ralph and Kris, who only had one week to cruise, turned north to go home.



Jan Jeirles, Jill Stanley, Susan Willetts, Pat Croft, Teresa Sorrenti, Donna Carr, Donna Lensis, & Linda Nelson, enjoy a Girls' Only Happy Hour on Bay Dreamer during an extended layover at White Point.

White Point

As we moved from Cobb Island to White Point, the weather was beautiful, and we all enjoyed the peace and tranquility of White Point after our exciting weekend at the Summer Kick-Off. But during the night, we were awakened by an intense thunderstorm with a deluge of rain, and we all knew that meant we would be staying at White Point an extra day to give the Bay time to calm down. Sunny skies by midday had us wondering if we should shove off for our next destination, Bay Creek Marina at Cape Charles, at the southern tip of the Eastern Shore. One look at the white caps just out front of the marina told us we should just stay put, a decision which was confirmed later when we heard that the waves on the bay that afternoon were five to eight feet.



Sea Duck, Too; Takin' It Easy; 'Bout Time; Party Time; & DeJaVu head into the channel for Bay Creek Marina at Cape Charles.

Cape Charles

As it turned out, that first delay was the only adjustment we had to make to our itinerary for the rest of the trip, and it only meant that we had one less day at Bay Creek. Still there was time for one round of Captain's Choice golf, and yes, the bragging rights for that one went to the team of Ralph, Rick, and Dave, prevailing over Harry's team of Kevin, Pam, and Steve by one point. Never let it be said that Ralph doesn't enjoy exercising his bragging rights!

Smithfield

Bay Creek is one of our favorite places to visit, but we were not too sad that this visit was cut short by one day because we knew that we would be stopping there again on the return trip. So we focused on the excitement of heading to a destination that was a new experience for most of us: Smithfield Station on the Pagan River. The Pagan River is beautiful, and the cruisers took a leisurely six-knot speed to enjoy the sights. Close adherence to the channel is a requirement, as much of the river is very shallow. No one hit bottom (always a good sign,) and OYC soon took over the entire transient dock at Smithfield Station Marina for two days. Historic Old Town Smithfield is within a few blocks' walking distance. With its antique stores and specialty shops, it's a pleasure to visit. Ask Rick about his unexpected, nautical antique find. At this point, Sharman and Catherine Harris joined the cruise by car. They stayed at the hotel in Smithfield and enjoyed shopping and dining with the group, then drove to meet us at the next stop.



Pat Croft, & Catherine & Sharman Harris ordering dinner at The Commodore Theater.

Portsmouth

The cruise group left Smithfield on Friday morning for the short run to Tidewater Yacht Agency where we were to lay over one night to be positioned right at Mile Marker 0, ready for an early departure the next morning on the next leg of the adventure: the Dismal Swamp. But since we were in Portsmouth for Friday evening...OYC cruisers never miss a good Happy Hour, so after getting everyone settled in at the marina, we walked (some took

a cab – it was hot!) to a new Portsmouth watering hole that both Teresa and Susan had read about in *Chesapeake Bay Magazine* – a bar called Still. After “worldly eclectic tapas and classic cocktails,” we moved around the corner to a well known “must see” establishment, The Commodore Theater (photo at left), where we took in the new Steven Spielberg movie, *Super 8*, from the comfort of swivel arm chairs while enjoying dinner and wine ordered by phones at each table. The Commodore is always a marvelous experience, no matter what movie is playing!

Back at the marina, there was no time for late-night partying. Our fearless leader had given the order: all boats must be away from the docks by 6:15 am the next morning! We were ready to try our hand at bridges and locks – ready to head south through the Dismal Swamp.

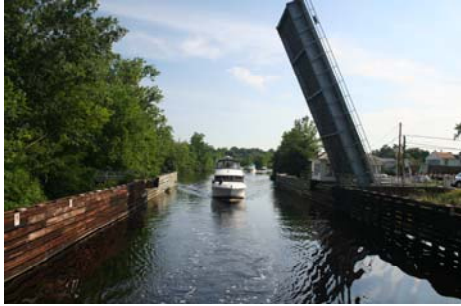


Dismal Swamp Canal

The Dismal Swamp Canal – a required passage for serious cruisers! There is so much history and legend about the swamp that give it a unique character and charm. Opened for travel in 1805, it is the oldest continually operating man-made canal in the country. The channel is narrow - at times so narrow we could almost pick leaves off the overhanging trees as we passed - and carries a minimum depth of six feet at the centerline. The natural scenery is a visual treat, with tall cypress trees draped in garlands of gray moss against a backdrop of dark, coffee-colored water, influenced by the peat that is prevalent throughout the swamp.

The six-knot speed limit in the canal allows ample time to enjoy the scenery. Though some might view the slow speed as a downside, the upside is that it saves props and shafts from damage due to USOs (Unidentified Submerged Objects). Floating logs and submerged snags are routinely cleared from the bottom of the canal, but on this trip, each of our captains encountered the occasional bump to the hull from a USO that no one (cont. on p. 7)

ever saw, but none sustained any damage to hull, shaft, or props.



The DSC, an alternate route of the ICW, is part of a 51-mile segment from Portsmouth to Elizabeth City. It includes several bridges that must be

raised to allow boats to pass, and two locks that raise or lower the water level as much as eight feet. Several of the skippers in our group had never negotiated locks before this trip, but everyone handled their lines perfectly. We managed to get the whole group of five boats through all of the bridges and both locks together and without mishap. Timing is critical when cruising the Dismal Swamp Canal because each of the bridges and locks opens on a specific schedule.

Unlike the ICW, the DSC does not have any marinas or anchorages along the way, but there is a Welcome Center after MM 23, and we stopped just long enough to purchase the obligatory "I Survived the Dismal Swamp" t-shirts. This Welcome Center is also a rest stop for automobile traffic on Highway 17, which parallels the DSC at this point. It felt strange to encounter ordinary highway traffic after several hours of quiet cruising through the isolated swamp.



Pasquotank River & Elizabeth City

The swamp canal empties into the Pasquotank River, so the last 14 miles of this route allows for faster speed as the river winds its way to Albemarle Sound at Elizabeth City. After traveling at no-wake speed for hours, our skippers were as exhilarated as school kids let out for recess to be on plane (above) as we maneuvered the broad curves and turns of the Pasquotank.

The Pasquotank brought us to Elizabeth City, the only destination where we were not certain of our

reservations. We hoped to stay at the Pelican Marina, which is really the only option for overnight docking with power, but during the planning stage, the dockmaster could not guarantee slips for all 5 boats; all he could say was that he didn't think there would be any problem. As it turned out, the very friendly and accommodating dockmaster made sure he was able to put all five boats in slips, so we were very pleased and settled in for a two-night stay. We did enjoy our time there – it was a friendly place and we had a great happy hour on the deck of their Tiki Hut Clubhouse. But in hindsight, we could have made it just a one-night stay. Elizabeth City itself didn't quite live up to our expectations.

Roanoke Island & Manteo

Early Monday morning, we set out to cross Albemarle Sound, which always provides an adventure; this crossing was no exception. The seas were "confused," meaning that we couldn't figure which way the waves were breaking. The shallowness of the Sound makes for short interval waves that move the boat all over the place. Nonetheless, all made it safely to Roanoke Island and the City of Manteo. The transient docks at Manteo are new, and the dockmaster is eager to help. The docks are located close to all the local shops of this quaint waterfront village. Catherine and Sharman Harris rejoined us for the two days we were in Manteo, staying at the Tranquil House Inn, adjacent to the City Docks.

The highlight of our stay at Manteo came on our second night there, when we attended the play, "The Lost Colony," on the actual sight of the first Roanoke colony, founded in 1587. The evening included a sunset picnic dinner, an informative backstage tour, and finally the outdoor performance under the stars: a re-enactment of the story of the first settlers to the New World.

We rented two cars for the day in order to transport all 12 cruisers to the performance site, which is a short distance from town. Since we picked up the cars early in the day, we had time to drive across the causeway to the Outer Banks. We took the world's fastest drive-through tour of the Wright Brothers Memorial and hit the beach at Kill Devil Hills (below) to get our feet wet – a few of us couldn't resist a full swim in the surf.



Next stop...Norfolk! Read the rest in the October issue.

Pat Croft, *Bay Dreamer*

Washington Nationals Game
James Creek Marina
September 17-19
Mike Crouch
703-906-8822

Shrimp Fest @ Hoffmasters
October 1
OYC Board & John Heinze
703-888-3837

PRYCA End of Summer Cruise
to Colonial Beach
October 7-9
Ralph & Kris Mason
703-790-1920

Election Meeting, Chili Cookoff,
& Octoberfest @ FYC
October 22
OYC Board & Tom Lensis
703-794-9589

ICW South to Florida
November 6-20
Tom & Donna Lensis
703-794-9589

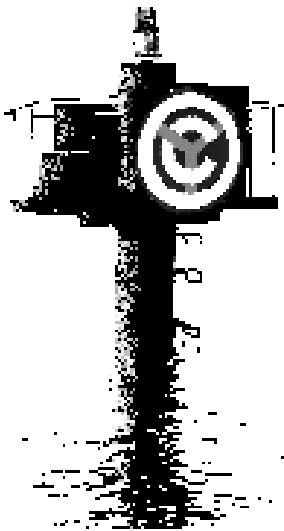
Hardy Souls Cruise to
National Harbor
November 11-13
Ned & Arleen Rhodes
703-741-0861

Inside this edition...

Check the calendar at left, and sign up for a fall cruise. Read Tom Plewes' column for more on upcoming events.

We all know what *really* started the Dismal Swamp fire...those hot OYCers on their June voyage! Read all about it!

When you're emptying out your boat this winter, don't forget the *Daymarker's* Nautical Bulletin Board to make room for more!



The Daymarker

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