

A Day Spent up the Bohemia River

OR

Things That Go Bump

By Phil Correll 31/May/2015

The end of May promised beautiful sailing weather to enjoy.

So, we offered a sail to Leigh and to Bryon, our boy.

Beautiful breeze rippled the surface of the Chesapeake Bay,

And by eleven-thirty we boarded and motored away.

Up the Bohemia River seemed the correct way to sail.

With our skills and know-how there was no-how we could fail!

Of course sharing the helm duty with guests on a cruise

Is how guests become sailors learning the hints they must use.

Bryon took the wheel for a while then offered it to Leigh.

She was guided and tutored by Eileen and by me.

Now, how could this happy and friendly sailboat go astray?

Read on if you choose, because it happened this way.

By hugging the south shore we moved up the river.

The boat heeled easily on each puff the wind would give her.

Leigh followed our directions to the very last letter
As she became as comfortable as we could possibly get her.
I watched the depth, and Eileen helped with the wheel.
Before any could move there was a loud “thunk” we could feel!
MARA moved on past it and bounced twice on the sand,
And before we realized it quite still we did stand!
“Chinese Fire Drill” could describe as we scurried about.
We made efforts to correct things and move the boat out.
I put the engine in gear, though it behaved quite perverse.
Nothing good ever happened since I put the tranny in reverse!
Wind heeled us harder and pushed us more onto the sand.
When I took the anchor off the boat I could easily stand!
Kedging in shallow water is a time-honored skill to be sure,
By moving just like that our grounding would find its cure.
As I waddled off with the anchor, the chain, and the line
Byron worked in a flourish and seemed to be doing just fine!
He fought with tangled anchor line and removed many a knot,
But after cranking on the winch, his energy was nearly shot.

Heat and frustration, emotions and exertion all take their toll.
When he lay down in the cockpit I was horrified to my soul!
Was he seriously ill, or was he just tired and hot?
We offered him water and salty pretzels in a tiny, shaded spot.
Rest and hydration proved to provide a quick cure,
But we worked more slowly from that time you can be sure.
Two men in a motor boat stopped by to offer some relief,
Though at that time we felt able to easily end our own grief.
After sitting at an angle for long enough to eat lunch,
Along came a man on a SkeeDo to help this poor bunch.
Jim Flickinger rode his red Skee to the side of our yacht,
And he offered to help with everything he has got!
Our situation was not dangerous in that time or place,
But Jim offered "the kids" a ride with kindness and grace.
He took Leigh and Bryon to our marina a mile down the way,
So they would not need to sit there for the rest of the day.
He returned two more times to offer any help that he could.
Each time he would visit he made us feel good.

Our adventure had started as the tide fell from “full high”.
We sat and watched longingly as low tide passed us by.
We marked with a boat hook the water’s current height,
And hoped we would not need to wait until eight in the night!
No words of recrimination or anger were heard.
In fact we never uttered a discouraging word!
We sat and talked and planned how to get our boat floated.
We felt other eyes look upon us as they smiled and gloated!
At five-thirty by the clock I pulled mightily on the anchor rode,
And our boat responded slowly as up the river the tide flowed.
As water beneath the keel became deeper bit by bit
Our boat began to move. Yes, we knew we could feel it.
Eileen took the wheel and started the diesel.
She is as competent there as behind her artist’s easel.
With engine running while sails and arms both pulled strong
The boat made some progress as she inched right along.
After grounding can a boat ever move with too much speed?
Yes, it can if the anchor has not yet been freed!

MARA spun to the port side with her anchor stuck in the mud.
I pulled in line and chain and got tangled just like Elmer Fudd.
Our second attempt to haul it out met with no more happy joy.
It took three attempts to retrieve that heavy metal toy.
Approaching Bo Vista Marina I still had a mess on the bow,
So I asked Eileen to circle so I could untangle it somehow.
Frank had walked to our slip to help with the docking,
But seeing us motor in circles must surely have been shocking!
Though his patience had been tested to near the breaking point
He remained on duty until we were safely docked in that joint.
After chatting and telling Frank of our day's harrowing tale
Along came Jim and his family to make sure we did not fail.
We invited Jim and Sandy to go for a sail in the days to come,
So we will have a chance to repay Jim's kindness just some.
Oh, we learned to be humble, and we learned how to help out.
Those are two good lessons for all, and there is no doubt!