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CROSSED ANCHORS

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Merry Christmas from Winston Salem Sail and Power Squadron



Commander

Lt/C Bill Davis, SN



Let's see. It's the end of 2017 and I'm supposed to say something thoughtful, inspiring, and sage like. Dollar down and dollar a week. The sun's going shine again. Pop goes the weasel. I don't know! We as a squadron had a pretty good year as best I can report. People with boats had a good year. No sinkings to report. People without a boat got to ride on a boat or wish they had a boat that didn't cost the size of the hole in the water they make. Me included.

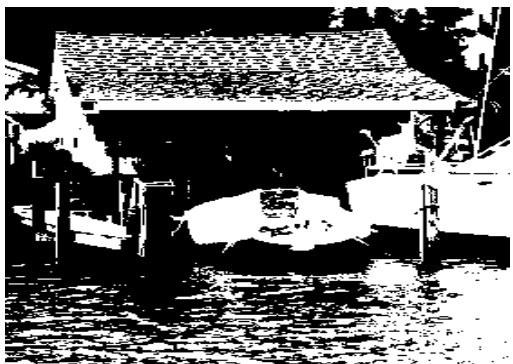
Actually I have high hopes of doing more coastal boating in 2018. I can now say my 20 foot outboard is pretty functional after having a go at trying to burn water in the engine several times this year. Finally just pumped everything out of the fuel tank, gasoline and water, and am starting over with non-ethanol gasoline. As I have reported to others it has all the conveniences of home. A soft place to sleep, a fan in the cabin for cooling and keeping the mosquitos off, a propane grille for cooking, a potty for disposal of that food, an ice chest for storage of food, and running water if you will hold your hands over the gunnel while I pour it on them.

Our annual Christmas party was last week. A wonderful time was had by all. We adorned our Christmas hats, exchanged gifts to the poem, "The Night Before Christmas" and had a wonderful meal thanks to Salem Glen Country Club.

Our Change of Watch is next month on January 20, (please mark on your calendar) and we return once again to Maple Chase Country Club which treated us very well last year. I have asked our Maker for no snow. Will permit some cold. And by over whelming acclamation by the membership I get to give the over the stern and over the bow speeches again.

And you can be pretty sure we will do some joint stuff with the Greensboro Power Squadron as my friend Mack Gordy will be their commander next year. Actually they all are my buddies.

So everyone have a Merry Christmas and start dieting shortly afterward.



Fish House Chronicles

By P/C Don Breault, AP



A Bridge Too Low

“Felix Discovers High Tide”

Part 2

Previously from “A Bridge Too Low”: As Felix continues to cruise his partially restored boat southbound on the ICW, Mandy goes below to work some magic in the galley. After an hour or so she comes back up with a libation from a recipe Denny gave her for a mid-morning break. It somehow had all of the food groups of breakfast in a glass and it had a high level of heat in the form of tomato juice. As Felix made the many turns around Swansboro and enters the Camp Lejeune part of the trip, somehow he may have missed the warning beacon about some live fire exercises going on that day with the Marine Corps. Felix just noticed that he had bought a new high capacity bilge pump as it was still in the package. He forgot to replace the 20 year old Rule pump in the bilge before leaving, but Felix felt that was no issue because there was no water coming in and it still worked as far as he knew.

Off in the distance, Felix sees yellow and blue strobe lights in the middle of the waterway. He looked down at his VHF and saw he forgot to turn it on. He must have been confident that the weather was good to go because that is pretty much what he used it for, other than to operate it like his CB in his monster pick up. So Felix switches on the power and calls out on channel 16: “Hey Coast Guard, You got your ears on?” This is the “Ester” “goin down southbound” “Hey Coast Guard, What’s your handle?”

Before too long, Felix came upon a naval patrol boat and a Coast Guard Inflatable that had blocked the southbound passage on the ICW. Off in the distance Felix could hear some thunderous sounding explosions somewhat like artillery fire. The Coast Guard boat hailed Felix by way of a bull horn demanding him to stop forward motion. Felix placed his gear selector into neutral and gradually came to a stop. The Coast Guard vessel came along side and the Lieutenant asked Felix if he did not see the beacon further up North restricting boating activities in the Camp Lejeune area of the ICW for the next 24 hours. Obviously Felix did not remember seeing that warning beacon, and gave the young Lieutenant that deer in the head light look. The Lieutenant also asked Felix if he had been monitoring his VHF for the securite messages all afternoon. Felix obviously did not as he never turned on his VHF.

The Coasties gave the Ester crew specific instructions to turn around and go back toward Swansboro and to continue the trip 24 hours later. So Felix managed to turn his sailboat around to include a slight corn planting exercise as he kicked up mud and silt while making many shifts forward and reverse as the 50 something footer heads in to a northerly direction. Along the way, Felix decides to do an anchorage in a gunk hole somewhere in lieu of docking into a marina in Swansboro. Maybe it is the cost or maybe it is the fear of his not so good docking skills, or maybe Felix just wants to use his ground tackle skills a few more times before the end of the boating season. Needless to say, he finds a small creek and turns Ester toward that direction.

Now understand that Felix has no depth finder or one that works. So water depth may become an issue not too far from the channel of the ICW. “Slam, crack, and pop” goes something down below as Ester comes to an abrupt halt dead in the water. Engine stalled and a slight sound of water rushing into the bilge. You guessed it, Ester is hard aground!! Mandy comes running up the companion way from the galley and informs Felix that there is a lot of water starting to enter the boat and was wondering what to do. The first thing Felix remembers is the new high capacity bilge pump he has that is still in the package and obviously the old one has completely failed. Soon Ester will be on the bottom with a bilge full of saltwater and the decks can become awash with the next boat wake from a big cruiser.

Quick thinking by Mandy as she remembered the thru hull emergency kit she bought at a recent marine yard sale in Beaufort. She pulled open a floor hatch and saw the gaping hole that is allowing seawater, local aquatic wildlife, and silt to begin discovering a new home. Mandy selects a wooden plug and slams it into the hole. No good as it was way too small. She picks out another and it is just right as it slowed the leak to a trickle. Felix calls Sea Tow and describes his dilemma. They soon arrive and the Sea Tow Captain asked Felix what is in his wallet first hand and does he have insurance. Felix does have insurance so the Sea Tow boat applies pumps and air bags to right up old Ester. Then he tows Ester to a marina in Swansboro to lift her out of the water for hull and running gear repairs. A two day repair job allows Ester to be refloated and back on her way south. During that down time, Felix did remember to install that new bilge pump and yes it was tested to see if it worked ok.

So now Felix & Mandy are once again heading south feeling good about the repairs and gaining another lesson in DEWDA. Hopefully Felix may not be the only person in the Power Squadron to get this coveted award for 2017. However, the trip is far from over for these two sailors. Off in the distance is the Onslow Swing Bridge with a height above water less than 15'. Ester's mast height is 52'. Felix has no chart plotter and no paper charts on board and he has no local knowledge other than what Don told him about timing your bridge openings. Felix interpreted that as entertainment to watch a draw bridge open up while it stacks up highway traffic. Felix feels the need to use the head and determines he has time to leave the helm for a quick moment. Meanwhile, Ester steams toward the low bridge that boasts barely 6 feet above the water at a speed of 8 knots.

As Felix finishes his business, he soon witnesses the inevitable. Ester is headed toward a low bridge. Felix quickly places the gear shift in reverse and applies full power astern. An action too late as the forward momentum was too great for the machinery capacity of a heavy sailboat. With no way to avoid the collision, Felix ducts and covers his head from the pieces of masthead, stays, lines, and small shards of bridge steel as it came falling onto the decks. A horrific noise of carnage as both Ester and the small bridge are both damaged and out of service for many weeks to come. The bridge attendant calls the Coast Guard. And within the hour the Coasties arrive and wouldn't you know, it was the same crew Felix met 3 days ago when he was asked to get out of the ICW. The Coast Guard Officer looked at Felix and the scattering of sail boat mast debris all over the deck and some of it still floating in the water. He also looks up and down at the damage to the swing bridge and declares the bridge temporarily out of service for both openings and cross over traffic. Felix now becomes the most popular person to hate in Onslow County.

The Coast Guard Officer now cites Felix for a number of violations and also asks for his proof of insurance. This will be an interesting explanation thought Mandy as she is thinking what the insurance adjuster will say when he gets this claim. She is also thinking that this tale of low bridge navigation is one for the books as the most incredible DEWDA ever. And the tide had nothing to do with this she thought. Mandy shouts out to Felix, “I am convinced there is a low profile down east cruiser in stock somewhere for you to trade up to”. “And don't tell me that this old sail boat is sentimental to you”. Felix holds his head down low in disgust and embarrassment as Mandy continues her lecture of navigational rules, chart plotting, and preplanning your cruises. That afternoon went on and on for poor Felix as he turned Ester back toward Swansboro one more time in the course of just a few days. Silence was the sound for the remaining trip at the helm of Ester. She will once again be dry docked for survey damage and a new mast will have to be found along with everything else that got taken out.

Now Felix being the old salt he is, thought that he will never give up sailing and cruising. After he docks Ester at Casper Marina in Swansboro, he goes below and recovers his copy of “Southern Boating” magazine, the down east cruiser edition. I wonder what Felix may have on his mind during the upcoming winter months of down time from boating? What will Mandy approve or not approve thinks Felix to himself.

Stay tuned for more boating adventures with Felix in 2018.

See you on the water !!

P/C Don Breault

“Boat Searching “



WSSPS would like to express a big thank you to Marshall Tyler for the years he has maintained our website. Marshall has been nominated by Frank Kemp of D2, Communications Committee for Distinctive Communicator Award for 2017. Our power squadron is very proud of this, and we again, thank Marshall for his hard work and time that has been put into our website.

Due to the fact that Marshall is remote, it is difficult for him to maintain this responsibility. If there is anyone who has the skills to pick up this torch and move on with it, this squadron would appreciate it. I am sure that Marshall will be happy to make sure the next person will have the tools necessary for success.

Please talk to Bill if you are able to continue this project.

Please all take note that there has been a change in the United States Power Squadron public site URL from usps.org to beyondboating.org. This is an exciting new site with great graphics, videos, and easy to access information.

WSSPS Upcoming Activity Schedule

Mon, Jan 8 Bridge Meeting - TBD 1800 hours

Sat, Jan 20 Change of Watch, Maple Chase Country Club