

# Boating Tips



BY KEVIN O'LEARY

## CRUISE-IN!

The sun was beginning to rise above the northern foothills of Mt. Diablo Friday morning on March 14, 2008, when the “Admiral” (my wife Susan) and I woke up. I jumped out of bed with my usual “Yabba-Dabba-Doo” from Fred Flintstone getting off work. (Drives her nuts, HA!) This was the weekend of a “cruise-in” with our yacht club, the Sacramento Bayliner Club (SBC). The wife groaned... “Leave me alone, let me sleep, I hate those people!”

### So What the Heck is a “Cruise-In”?

A cruise-in is where a group, usually a boating club of some sort, travels by water (and sometimes by land) on their vessels/autos to a predetermined destination. A cruise-in implies that you will be docked and may (hopefully) have shore power. Sometimes there are lots of attractions like shopping and dining ashore; sometimes the dock party is the only game in town.

So... anyway, after two cups of Peet’s Coffee and perusing the local paper for the marine forecast, the Admiral sat back, thought for a moment and said: “Wait a minute... I changed my mind; I think I like those people, let’s go!” So off we went to get supplies for the weekend.

SBC cruises in to Tower Park Resort. Photo courtesy of Bob Sanders



We were one of three couples sponsoring this particular event, so we were excited and eager to make sure all had a merry time. Of course, the fact that it was the Club's St. Patrick's Day outing made it that much more special to the O'Leary's. FYI... Our family motto is: "*What do you say we have a drink and start a fight?!*" HA!

After loading all of the supplies, we embarked on the 27-mile trip from our home berth at Pittsburg Marina to Tower Park Resort & Marina in Lodi. We came up the San Joaquin River to the mouth of the Mokelumne River doing a nifty 18 mph. (Not bad for pushing 17 tons through the water!)

At this time I started monitoring channel 9 in conjunction with 16 in order to pick up any opening requests for the Mokelumne River Bridge over Highway 12. Sure enough, two other vessels were requesting an opening within 5 minutes of my ETA. I communicated with the other vessels and the bridge operator and all were in agreement to synchronize the opening. It worked out perfectly. The bridge opened and closed rapidly, all three vessels passed quickly, alleviating backed-up traffic on 12.

With greenhouse warming and the (skyrocketing) cost of fuel for the average American these days, stopping traffic on Highway 12 to let a vessel go by leaves a huge "carbon footprint." This is an area where we boaters can make a difference just by effectively communicating with bridge operators and other boaters getting ready to request a bridge opening and timing the opening so all can pass swiftly, allowing vehicular traffic to flow smoother, which in turn will reduce auto/

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truck emissions. And the best part is: IT'S FREE!! But... I digress:

We arrived at our destination right on time at 2 p.m. Normally, club members are at the ready to help members land their vessels. But in my case, being a boating instructor and never having won the Chicken Award (I'll get to that later), they all just stand around watching my every move, looking to see if I really know how to drive these things. As usual, the Admiral and I landed that puppy like it was a fighter plane on an aircraft carrier. HA! They all groaned and walked away, impressed but disappointed. (Just kidding guys. Thanks for the help!)

Friday afternoon we relaxed, ate lunch on the boat and mingled with those members who had arrived. Dinner was just up the gangplank at the Sunset Bar & Grill. Before I forget, special thanks to Ms. Trish Molnar, proprietor of the restaurant, for hosting our indoor events and meals. You and your team did an outstanding job!

Saturday morning many members slept in to try to catch up on rest after a long work week. (Not to mention staying up to 2 a.m. at the bar the night before.) HA! I had a lesson to do so took off at 9 a.m. and got back at 1 p.m.

Not long after my return, the usual Saturday cruise-in festivities got under way. This consisted of some ridiculous but hysterical "game" we played involving boats, toilet plungers and money. (Don't ask!) It didn't take long for other patrons in the restaurant to join in and before we knew it the entire place was rockin' and rollin' and having a grand time. Simultaneously, the hors d'oeuvres were served for everyone. This is a lot of fun. Everyone brings a dish and we all spread it out for all to enjoy. The cocktails were flowing and the day was beautiful for a Saturday in mid-March.

As the day wore on we all wandered from boat to boat visiting with neighbors/friends and guests of members.

**Top: Club member Dave Toms bestows the Chicken Award to Susan "The Admiral" O'Leary.** Photo courtesy of Bob Sanders

**Middle: Kevo received the Chicken Award from his wife, Susan.** Photo courtesy of Bob Sanders

**Bottom: The SBC gang plays to win!** Photo courtesy of Bob Sanders



The excellent staff of the restaurant served dinner – corned beef and cabbage – all you could eat! After dinner most went back to the boats to walk the dogs, change clothes and whatnot. Then it was back up to the bar for more mayhem! Susan retired early and I continued on well after the crack o' 10 p.m. You should have seen me "strutting" around the bar celebrating the fact that I stayed up later than the Admiral.

## The Chicken Award

The Chicken Award is bestowed on the club member who does the dumbest, most embarrassing faux pas during one of our outings. For this particular outing, the award was given to none other than my wife, the Admiral. And for what, you ask? Apparently her “sin” was going to bed earlier than her husband (me) on Saturday night. This has never happened before and they don’t call me “Beddy Bye Kevo” for nothing! (In reality, I think club members were really teasing me for retiring early at our gatherings.)

OK... Fast forward to our next cruise-in in April to the Caliente Isle Yacht Club. All weekend my wife was on the lookout for the next Chicken Award recipient. I made the mistake of telling a few members about this article and the fact that I was going to publish a photo of Susan receiving the Chicken Award and apparently word got back to her. So who do you think got the Chicken Award? You guessed it: yours truly. And for what you ask? “Unauthorized publication of a photo of a spouse in *Yachtsman* magazine.”

### Kevo’s Tip:

Never, ever publish a picture of your wife winning the Chicken Award in *Yachtsman* magazine without her permission. You will pay dearly. (Trust me!)

With the cost of fuel for boating reaching record levels, recreational mariners like us have to make choices about when and where to travel in our vessel. Joining a yacht/boat club and participating in cruise-in events represent a great opportunity to get a lot of bang for your buck when it comes to enjoying the pristine waters of NorCal and the camaraderie of fellow club members. By the time this article publishes, I will have (hopefully) bestowed the honor of the Chicken Award on another deserving club member. HA!

**As always, feedback is appreciated. I can be reached at 925/890-8428 or kevo@yachtsmanmagazine.com. ☞**