

KEVO'S BOATING TIPS

BY
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Ebony Boat Club Celebrates Juneteenth

This month I'm going to step out of the box a bit and tell you about an event I took part in at the Ebony Boat Club on Bruno's Island on the Delta. Bruno's Island is located on Seven Mile Slough just off the San Joaquin River. There will be a boating tip or two in the context of the column, but you'll need to read through it (and maybe between the lines) to really get the message.

The event was called Juneteenth and took place on Saturday, June 11. Juneteenth is a very important historical event for many African Americans. It marks the day word (and the law) of the Emancipation Proclamation reached Texas nearly two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln signed it into law, ending slavery in America.

Every year since 1983 the Ebony Boat Club has teamed up with organizations such as The Cub Scouts and various places of worship to bring children from places like Oakland, Vallejo and Richmond out to the Delta to see another side of life. Most of these kids have never even seen the Delta let alone gone fishing or for a boat ride.

This year's event was a smashing success! Approximately 120 youths attended. This was



Kids embarking on a fast ride from the Ebony Boat Club.



"Are we having fun yet?"

the largest turnout for the Juneteenth event ever. Club members provided their own vessels to give boat rides for the kids. They had lots of cool games and a really great BBQ. West Marine's Antioch location contributed brand new lifejackets for all the kids. Westmar Marine Insurance Services of Stockton contributed \$1,500 for the food.

I arrived at 9 a.m. on our yacht, *Her Way*, and was warmly greeted by the Commodore of the Ebony Boat Club Marilyn Brock and Lenora Clark, Commissioner of the California Department of Boating & Waterways and a member of the club.

The kids started arriving around 10:30 and got to ride on a variety of boats including a few beefed-up Searay Pachangas. The bigger boats stayed in port on account of wind and docking issues, but the kids got to tour some really nice hardware at the dock, including a cool 46-ft. Maxim.

Later in the morning Contra Costa County Sheriff Warren Rupf arrived and was presented with three Garmin GPS units for his Contra Costa Marine Patrol Division by West Marine's West Coast Inland District Manager Charley Almassey and Antioch Manager Harvard Davis.



Camp Run-A-Muck, aka Ebony Boat Club.



Contra Costa County Sheriff Warren Rupf accepts three GPS units for the CCC Marine Patrol Division from West Marine's Antioch location. Pictured from left, Marilyn Brock, Commodore, Ebony Boat Club; Lenora Clark, Commissioner, California Department of Boating & Waterways; Warren Rupf; Charley Almassey, West Coast Inland District Manager, West Marine; Harvard Davis, Manager, West Marine Antioch location.

West Marine's Antioch store also contributed 50 life jackets to the CCC Marine Patrol to distribute to (absent minded) boaters who don't have enough PFD's onboard. And you thought they only wrote tickets!

Sergeant Will Duke and his team arrived just after their boss, Sheriff Rupf, left. I tried to pull a fast one on him by telling him (and his team) that the boss was ticked off on account of their late arrival... he wasn't biting. (Excuse the pun.) Some in his team did look concerned for a moment there, though. Ha!

By now the event was in full swing and the kids were having a blast. (Reminded me of "Camp Run-a-Muck" when I was a kid.) Throughout the day all of the club members worked nonstop to



Commodore Brock welcomes Sergeant Will Duke and his team to the Ebony Boat Club.



West Marine donated lifejackets for all the kids. Westmar Marine Insurance Services picked up the tab for the food (\$1,500!).

keep the kids safe on the docks and at the same time taught them about having respect for the water. Every kid had a brand new lifejacket on while around the dock area (and they all fit). Some liked them so much they kept them on throughout the day, playing volleyball and eating lunch at the picnic BBQ.

After lunch it was back to the dock for some serious fishing. The club supplied the poles, reels and bait for everyone. When the first kid caught his first fish the place went nuts. (You should have seen the look on the kid's face.) Unfortunately, I didn't have my camera handy. The club members fanned out and took groups of kids under their wings to teach them how to fish. (Come to think of it, I could have used some fishing tips, too.)

At about 5 p.m. it was time to pack up the kids and head for home. I fired up *Her Way* and was given a fond farewell by all. On the way back to my marina I ran into a stranded vessel due to



Fishing was a reel hit!

engine trouble on the San Joaquin River. They had been in the tules for a long time waiting to catch someone's eye going by but to no avail. Their home base was five miles out of my way but I said "Ah, what the heck," and towed them all the way back. They bought me dinner and I stayed the night on *Her Way* at the dock outside of the Rusty Porthole restaurant on Bethel Island. I never did get their names, but I told all three of them that they have to do a good deed for someone else so we get four good deeds out of one. (Works every time.)

On the way there I contemplated how I was going to approach this column. Then it dawned on me: the Ebony Boat Club had managed to combine their passion for boating with compassion. They opened up their club and their hearts to give some young people the chance to broaden their horizons, teach them the historical significance of Juneteenth and have some really good fun. What could be better than that? I can honestly say I haven't had a more rewarding day on the Delta this season.

So, what is Kevo's Boating Tip this month? Follow the Ebony Boat Club's example. Find a way to combine your passion for boating with compassion. Help a boater in distress. Take some kids out and teach them how to fish. Take your neighbor's kids out for a boat ride. Teach a kid how to wakeboard (or water ski). Participate in the next event of this sort at the Ebony Boat Club.

The plans aren't final yet but next year they hope to hold this event at Brannan Island State Park in Isleton. This would greatly expand the ability of additional youths, boaters and organizations to participate. This venue also offers overnight campgrounds and plenty of dock space for bass boats, ski boats, runabouts and small cruisers. So what are you waiting for?

The Ebony Boat Club wants to grow this event and is eager to hear from you. Working together, we can bring more young people out to the paradise we know as the Delta and show that we care about the youths in our communities. For more information on how you and/or your organization can get involved with or contribute to the "Youth Activities" program sponsored by the Ebony Boat Club, call Commodore Marilyn Brock at 510/233-3370 or visit www.ebonyboatclub.com.

Be safe & happy boating! ☞