

CAPT'N KEVO'S

Boating Tips

Big Cat Poker Run

The Big Cat Poker Run is back! This event will take place Saturday, Aug. 14, on the Delta. Due to economic circumstances, this event/rally/charity had to be canceled last year.

Some of you are asking: What the heck is the Big Cat Poker Run (BCPR)? To be honest, up to a few years ago I thought they were referring to high-performance (power-boat) catamarans rallying around the Delta. HA!

The BCPR refers to the Lion's Club of Discovery Bay. Hence the name: "Big Cat." The "Poker Run" aspect of this event has to do with the five stops on the run. At every stop, each participating boat is given an envelope with a randomly picked playing card in it. (The cards are placed in the envelopes in advance.)

At the end of the poker run, everyone opens the five envelopes they've received and whoever has the best poker hand wins. The three prizes for this year's event total



\$5,000!

Needless to say, the vast majority of the funds go to the Lion's Club of Discovery Bay for distribution to various charities. (Good job guys and gals!)

OK... Let's be clear about one thing regarding this event: It is not a race. It is a rally and family event meant to raise funds for various charities. Much coordination has gone into the planning of this event. The Coast Guard (USCG), Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCGA) and all related law enforcement agencies are aware and are deploying assets for this event. It is also sanctioned by the Coast Guard with an Event Permit.

In addition, the participants of this year's event have agreed that the driver of each registered vessel will wear a wristband prohibiting him/her from purchasing alcohol at any of the five stops. And all participants have agreed to wear life vests throughout the day on the water, setting a good example for the rest of us. (Me included.)

The key reason I am writing about this upcoming event is to let the recreational boating public know in advance what is coming that day, and to suggest some safety measures that may help ensure this year's event is a happy, incident-free



Photos courtesy of Lenny Headley.

charity event for participants as well as recreational boaters who happen to be boating this weekend on the Delta.

As usual, I needed to experience for myself what it was like to ride in one of these extremely high-performance vessels to get a good perspective for this article. So I got in touch with my good friend Mr. Allen Bellinghousen (aka AB). He hooked me and the Admiral up with Tony Adams and Mike McGuire. This trio fits my description of my three best friends: Bad Luck, Trouble and Double Trouble. HA!

Anyway, we showed up at Tony's "palatial" estate and boarded his high-performance, 39-foot vessel *Blown Away*.

We started off from Discovery Bay and proceeded to the Riverboat restaurant on the Delta Loop for lunch. This took approximately 20 minutes door-to-door. Those of you who know these waters and this route realize the speeds we were traveling at. But the speed is not the important factor here. Anyway, it was a great ride!

This trip gave me a deep appreciation for how precarious it is to operate these high-performance vessels in the confines of the Delta with others in the vicinity.

Things happen fast and not everyone is seen (or sees the oncoming offshore vessel) on busy waterways at high speeds. One thing is for sure, you will hear them before you see them. HA! (Remember... NOT a race!)

So, I thought I'd go to the source, AB, and ask some questions the general boating public would like to have answers to regarding this event:

What should the general boating public look out for on Saturday, Aug. 14?

A large, long, spread-out group of high-performance, offshore vessels traveling at speeds of approximately 60 to 90 mph along the San Joaquin deepwater shipping channel. Holland Cut will be used when transiting to and from Discovery Bay at much slower speeds.

How can the general recreational boating public help make this a safe event?

Remember to always follow the rules of the road. Try to navigate on the right side of the channel. If you hear us coming, please get to the far right ASAP or if you find yourself caught in the mix, please slow and keep a straight line as we will maneuver around you. Also, please keep in mind some of the boats may throw



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a large rooster tail of water behind the boat; please stay clear.

What are the stops on the event?

Discovery Bay, Pittsburg Yacht Club, Delta Yacht Club, Stockton Waterfront, then back to Discovery Bay.

Will there be access to the boats to the general public?

Absolutely! Just stop by the Discovery Bay Marina on Thursday afternoon, Aug. 12, for the Boat, Bike and Hot-Rod Show.

Who is sponsoring this event?

While we have many sponsors, our title sponsor is Teague Custom Marine; our other main contributor is Colledgewood. For a complete list of sponsors, please go to www.bigcatpokerrun.com.

Where do the proceeds go?

All proceeds (besides the 5K in prizes) go to Discovery Bay Lion's Club.

Kevo's Tip:

The Big Cat Poker Run on the Delta is a unique and exciting event to watch or participate in; however, as with all boating activities, it comes with inherent risks. With very close coordination with law enforcement, USCG and USCGA and with this columnist, the BCPR is determined to make this event a safe, fun and spectacular event for all.

Be safe & happy boating!

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