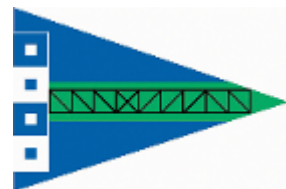


THE BRIDGE



Communication to join, support and connect the members of
PARRY SOUND POWER AND SAIL SQUADRON
a unit of Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons since 1961
More than 50 years in support of safe boating



AUTUMN 2013



Exploring the Georgian Bay Biosphere; the Beagle tied up at Jones Island.

IN SEARCH OF THE SACRED TURTLE

At the south end of Shawanaga Bay, on the mainland, lies a rock formation that looks uncannily like a giant turtle. According to early Native belief, the world lay on the shell of a turtle, and so it follows that this formation, logically known as the Sacred Turtle, should be enshrouded with mystical properties.

In my bygone days as a Pointe-au-Baril cottager, I had heard vague tales of the Sacred Turtle, later clarified in the late Ruth McCuaig's fine book *Our Pointe-au-Baril*, but had never gone for a look. I still, however, had a nagging gap in my psyche, and the Sacred Turtle for many years was on my Georgian Bay Bucket List.

This began to change on Labour Day weekend last year. Jo Bossart, our Communications and Membership Officer, and his wife Anne were starting up a business called Red Rock ecoAdventures and signed me up to be a guide (an ancient Georgian Bay tradition) on an orientation voyage up the coast, specifically to locate the Sacred Turtle as a port of call. With a crew expanded by Jo and Anne's daughter Christina, my wife Debra, and our toy poodle Bruno (who filled the role of ship's dog), we set out in the Bossart's boat *Beagle* (named for Darwin's ship of discovery) over a glassy sea...

...and our enterprise was a complete bust. Armed only with vague directions, we searched along the shore, our quest muddled by a reference to a flagpole adjacent to the Turtle. We assumed therefore that there must be a cottage nearby, but after traversing a colony of cottages and finding no Turtle, we turned for home. So obsessed were we by this

time that we kept seeing cloud forms like turtles and Christina made some remark about how we were searching for our Inner Turtle. This bit of levity cheered up an otherwise disconsolate crew, although I must say it was hard to feel down on such a day, a typical end-of-summer day when out of sheer perversity the Bay is at its most exquisitely beautiful.

Unfinished business can be like a sliver in the brain, so nothing would do but try again in June. Off we went, then, in the trusty *Beagle*, again hugging the mainland shore opposite Twin Sisters Island. Again we couldn't find the Sacred Turtle, so Jo went to the simple expedient of going ashore and asking directions.

The Turtle, as it happened, was just around the next point to the south, so off we puttered and, five minutes later, we were there...and what a spectacle! There was the Turtle in all its stony majesty and, yes, there was a flagpole nearby, but used, not for display of a flag, but festooned with Native regalia of one kind and another.



Parry Sound Power & Sail Squadron's Editor-in-Chief, Steven Duff, makes a tentative offering.



Legend has it that the Sacred Turtle oversees the weather where Shawanaga Bay, Shebeshekong Bay, and the open Georgian Bay converge, sometimes setting up an exceptionally violent weather pattern. It is custom, then, to leave an offering to the Turtle to keep it happy and in turn ensure a safe passage through the adjacent waters. Offerings there were in plenty on a rocky ledge beneath the Turtle; greeting cards painted on flat stones, some tobacco (*very traditional*), beads, coins, and some things weathered beyond recognition. Lacking anything else, we left a couple of maple cookies.

There are certain places that have a Feeling, a feeling of awe and mystery, and this was certainly one of those moments.

In my own life, other places with the Feeling have been Ste.

Marie-Among-the-Hurons at Midland, the Abbey of St. Columba in Scotland, and the front veranda of Uncle Tom's Cabin in Dresden, Ontario.

So, for a truly spiritual experience, a visit to the Sacred Turtle is highly recommended. You'll want a chart, of course, or one of those nifty electronic tablet things. To find the Turtle, you turn east just south of Twin Sisters Island; a handy landmark is something that looks like the Bong tree in *The Owl and the Pussycat*, an exceptionally tall thing that is either a tree or a cell tower festooned with ivy. Whatever it is, it is unmistakable, so head for it, find Somerset Island, and just in back of it is the Sacred Turtle.

PRIVATE MARKERS

Most of us, if not all, have had the experience of encountering casual markers, usually Clorox jugs, placed by cottagers to warn of shoals or boulders. Conventional wisdom accepts that folks who take the time and trouble to do this should be applauded. But get this: if a home-made marker is misinterpreted and leads to a mishap, the Samaritan cottager can be sued, as if it were better to do nothing.

If you're in unfamiliar waters, there's no question that it can be a tough call as to how to deal with a private marker. In open water, you can't go wrong giving it a wide berth, but in a narrow passage, common sense dictates that you feel your way past it at dead slow. Then, if you go aground, no harm, barring a scrape or two.

This matter came to light in the current issue of *Georgian Bay Today*, a highly-recommended quarterly in which yours truly is a regular contributor. Hear that horn blow! Anyway, Bob Snider of the Cognashene Cottagers' Association had discovered this situation through inquiry, as well as finding that the convenient Clorox jugs were no longer acceptable. Transport Canada (not Coast Guard) regulations call for a high-visibility object that shows 6 inches wide and 12 inches above the water, with reflective material at least 4 inches wide around the circumference. The letters PRIV must be displayed, as well as the name, address, and phone number of whoever planted the marker. It must be moored securely to ride out any weather.

So now, rather than an empty Clorox jug, our Samaritan cottager must go shopping for something that meets specifications, reflective tape, etc., and our concern is that such good folk will simply say the devil with it and not bother, *especially* if you can't be sued for doing nothing! Too bad that Doing the Right Thing has to be such a hassle.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

Likely at first glance, the name Captain Phillips won't mean anything, unless you happen to personally know a Captain Phillips. But let us refresh you. Capt. Richard Phillips was the skipper of the U.S.-flag freighter *Maersk Alabama* that was hijacked by pirates four or so years ago. The captain offered himself as hostage to spare his crew and was imprisoned in one of those new fully-enclosed lifeboats, completely invisible to any onlookers. However, the pirates did not reckon with the U.S. Navy Seals...

When this saga, and that is not too strong a word, was in the media (and successfully resolved), I said to my wife, "What a great story! It would make an awesome movie." Well, folks, it *has* been made into a movie, starring Tom Hanks, a certain indication of quality. So let us all keep a weather eye on the Strand Theatre and maybe have a joint outing. Time we did something together anyway. We know you're out there!

TITANIC II

There is some news coming down the pipe concerning a full-size replication of the *Titanic*, with, of course, up-to-date safety features. This is an odd but interesting development, the brainchild of Australian business-man Clive Palmer; on one level, the project will certainly be the subject of much superstition and unease, but on another, it would give us a valuable window into the nature of sea travel a century ago. Granted, the movies *A Night to Remember* and *Titanic* did a first-rate job of same, but, as in any other movie, we *saw* it but did not *experience* it. *And* it would be a treat to have a beautiful ship out there once again instead of the floating shopping malls that are the current fashion. We anticipate having a story on this in the Winter (ecch!) issue of *The Bridge*.

iPad NAVIGATION APPS

In the last couple of months we posted a series of articles on the Squadron's website (www.parrysoundboating.com) that looked at three navigation apps for the Apple iPad. You might want to head over and take a look at the findings.

An iPad equipped with GPS (only available on WiFi + Cellular models) makes for a very useful traveling partner when boating in and around the Parry Sound area. In addition to providing reliable information on the vessel's current location the apps available for the iPad provide all of the detail of the official charts in an easy to use format. These apps are not an 'legal' substitute for the paper charts but you'll probably find yourself relegating the paper charts to back up use. The iPad charts, even on bright days, are legible from an unshaded cockpit or bridge.

There is no need to subscribe for cellular service to use the apps, but you will still need the WiFi + Cellular version of the iPad. Many of the same apps are available for the iPhone which comes equipped with GPS as standard. And while I haven't tried working with these apps on an iPhone I suspect the small screen size will only be useful in a pinch, or perhaps for use on a sailboat where things don't move that quickly. Android tablets with a GPS may be a lower cost alternative to an iPad. I recently purchased a Nexus 7 Android tablet. After a month of software problems Google has finally provided an update that fixed the GPS problems; too late to give it a proper trial on the water. I'll give it a try next year and report back. (JB - *Communications Officer*)

A VISIT TO THE UMBRELLAS

The Georgian Bay Land Trust (www.gblt.org) is a volunteer operated not-for-profit organization with a mission to preserve the archipelago and adjacent waters of the eastern shore of Georgian Bay, an area we have come to think of as our Georgian Bay Biosphere. In addition to stewarding some 2,000 acres of properties the GBLT provides opportunities for members of the public to visit their properties as part of education outreach.

This summer Anne and I headed out to Umbrella Island, a GBLT property, to join the GBLT's Rock Walk. This was a guided introduction to the geology of Umbrella Island led by Dr. Nick Eyles, Professor of Geology at the University of Toronto and West Carling resident. While only a few kilometers west of Sans Souci, the ride out proved to be wild and wet on the Beagle with waves forming swells that approached two meters. But Umbrella Island proved to be most hospitable after we arrived sheltering the Beagle from the waves breaking on the west facing shore. All-in-all it was a wonderful day walking on the rocks and learning a little more about their history as told by a master geologists.

The Umbrellas are a relatively short ride from Sans Souci and well worth the trip. There are a few rules beyond the most obvious, including no fires and no camping. (JB - Communications officer)



THE BRIDGE: this is the team serving you for 2013-14. If you need information, have a question, or need help with something related to the Squadron, feel free to contact the appropriate person for assistance. And if you have a story for this newsletter, please contact editor@parrysoundsquadron.ca

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