

The ABA Beacon®

Publication for American Boating Association Associate Members

Boating Destination

Cruising the Great Lakes – Simply Great Freshwater Cruising

by W. Lynn Seldon, Jr. - Boating and Travel Writer

Quite simply, there may be no better freshwater boating in the world than in the Great Lakes region. This incredibly varied part of North America features great cruising and a wide range of options on and off the water.

Both veteran and beginner boaters may be surprised to learn that, taken together, the Great Lakes comprise the largest body of freshwater in the world. Eight U.S. states and two Canadian provinces border this massive boating playground.

“With 10,000 miles of shoreline, the Great Lakes is the single largest boating market in North America,” says Chad Schlegel, editor of *Lakeland Boating* magazine. “Lots of people don’t realize how vibrant our cruising scene is. Our mission is to help our readers enjoy what’s arguably one of the world’s premier freshwater or saltwater cruising grounds.” They definitely fulfill this mission with an incredibly informative magazine and five big *Ports O’ Call* cruising guides that are crucial (along with appropriate charts) for enjoying Great Lakes boating. (ABA members can receive special



A View of Chicago from Lake Michigan

discounts on the magazine and guides. See page 3 for details.)

Several major connecting waterways expand the region, providing links to boaters along the Mississippi River, St. Lawrence Seaway, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the Ohio River, and several more. Numerous inland lakes and rivers allow trailer

boaters to reach an incredible number and diversity of locations.

Generally speaking the Great Lakes boating region includes Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, and Lake Superior, as well as many smaller bodies of water. The states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, and Minnesota all have direct access to Great Lakes boating, while many other states have convenient access by way of rivers and roads. In Canada, Great Lakes boating is expanded in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Great Lakes boating can mean metropolitan meanderings to big cities like Chicago (six harbors), Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, and

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ABA Member Benefits

- *The ABA Beacon*® Newsletter
- *ABA Online*™: www.americanboating.org
- ABA Visa® Credit Card: 800-FIRSTUSA
- ABA Signature Items Catalog: 800-480-2053
- ABA Theme Park and Zoo Discounts: 508-432-8846
- Avis Auto Rental Discounts: 800-331-1212, AWD# B853101
- Comfort Inn, Comfort Suites, Clarion, Sleep Inn, Quality Inn, MainStay Suites, Rodeway Inn, and Econo Lodge Discounts: 800-424-6423, #00058336
- Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruise Line Discounts: 888-226-2100, #ABA
- ABA Calling Card: 800-657-4711
- Cendant Hotel Discounts: #60093:
 - Days Inn, 800-268-2195;
 - Howard Johnson, 800-769-0939;
 - Knights Inn, 800-682-1071;
 - Ramada, 800-462-8035;
 - Travelodge, 800-545-5545;
 - Wingate Inn, 877-202-8814
- Passport Health: 888-499-PASS (7277) I.D. #ABA
- iWant.com: www.americanboating.org
- Movie Discount Program: www.americanboating.org or 800-565-3712. Reference code CORP043000 and member I.D. #99110303

You can access all of these benefits at www.americanboating.org

ABA Travel Advisory and Safety Pamphlets and Brochures

What travel documents will I need for my trip to Europe? As a woman traveling alone, what can I do to minimize my vulnerability? How do I find out vaccination requirements for my trip to Africa? What currency do I need and how does my destination country's system work? Do I need special health insurance to cover my companions and me while traveling? What precautions should I take while staying in a hotel? These and other questions posed by travelers are vital and endless. To help you get the answers, ABA (through its sister association, World Travelers of America), offers its members a variety of travel brochures at no charge. These are only accessible online at

www.americanboating.org. Also available are two informative and enlightening travel pamphlets, *Advance Planning – Key To A Safe Trip Abroad* (13 pages) and *Personal Security While Traveling In The U.S.* (10 pages). They are available for purchase through the mail at \$6.95 for *Advance Planning ...*, \$5.95 for *Personal Security ...*, or \$10.00 for both. You may also download them from our website for \$4.95 & \$3.95 respectively or \$8.00 for both. For more information or to order pamphlets, visit our website, www.americanboating.org; or contact us at 508-432-8846 (phone), 508-430-2049 (fax), admin@americanboating.org (e-mail), or by mail at P.O. Box 417, Harwich Port, MA 02646. ☐

Parks Added to ABA Theme Park and Zoo Discount Program

ABA is pleased to announce the addition of Six Flags® Magic Mountain and the San Diego Zoo to the theme parks and zoos participating in the *ABA Theme Park and Zoo Discount Program*. Magic Mountain is located minutes north of Hollywood, California, and is home to some of the most thrilling roller-coaster rides in the world. The San Diego Zoo cares for over 3,800 animals

of 800 different species. Its collection of animals, as well as its plant collection of over 6,500 species, is acknowledged as one of the finest in the world. To learn more about these parks and the *ABA Theme Park and Zoo Discount Program*, or to order your free discount ticket coupons, visit *ABA Online™* at www.americanboating.org, or call ABA at 508-432-8846. ☐

New ABA Member Benefit – Cendant Hotels Discount Program

As an ABA member, you can now take advantage of a 15% - 30% discount at participating Cendant Hotel properties. Those properties include some of the most recognized names in the hotel industry: Days Inn, Howard Johnson, Knights Inn, Ramada, Travelodge, and Wingate Inn. The program offers discounts at over 4,000 hotels worldwide! To receive your discount, you must call each hotel's central

reservation system and tell them that you are an ABA member with member id # 60093. The toll free hotel numbers are: Days Inn, 800-268-2195; Howard Johnson, 800-769-0939; Knights Inn, 800-682-1071; Ramada, 800-462-8035; Travelodge, 800-545-5545; Wingate Inn, 877-202-8814. For a listing of locations for each property, visit *ABA Online™* at www.americanboating.org and choose the *Lodging Discount Program* option. ☐

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Toronto, as well as completely quiet areas where you may not see other boaters (or people on land) for hours. Facilities can also vary from huge marinas with every possible amenity to one-person operations with a gas pump and little else (except that Great Lakes friendliness that pervades the boating community).

The weather can also vary as greatly as the scenery, making your choice of lake and boat as important as ever. The conditions can vary from pond-like to ocean-awesome by the lake and by the hour.

Climatologists refer to the Great Lakes basin as a climatological battlefield for three specific reasons: the Great Lakes feature huge bodies of water surrounded by large land masses; the air masses that tend to flow in from other regions; and the influences on the weather by the lakes themselves. Air masses alternate often between humid air from the Gulf of Mexico and dry and cold air from the Arctic. This means weather systems change frequently between cyclonic low-pressure cells and anticyclonic highs. For Great Lakes boaters, this means quick changes, frequent rain, and lots of other interesting weather.

But GPS, loran, and radar, as well as the

Weather Channel and expanded local TV weather coverage, have all made boating easier when it comes to weather changes. Thus, Great Lakes boaters can plan to make time when the weather is calm and predicted to stay calm, while staying close to shore or laying over when the weather turns nasty or is predicted to do so.

Wave height is definitely beyond a boater's control and is to be taken very seriously in the Great Lakes. This means laying over when the waves reach your boat's critical height, whatever that may be. In the Great Lakes, as elsewhere, boaters are definitely better safe than sorry.

Along with charts (see below), the best way to stay safe and happy while boating in the Great Lakes is with *Lakeland Boating's Ports O' Call* cruising guides. They remain the most comprehensive full-color resources on the market. These fun-to-read guides offer more than 300 pages packed with information on each lake's port towns and the attractions and amenities found there, including restaurants, tourist and historical sites, marinas, and more. The *Ports O' Call* series includes Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, and Lake Superior.

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Boat Shows

May 4-7, 2000

Orange County Boat Show, CA

(714) 633-7581 www.scma.com

Pacific Power Boat Expo, CA

(800) 834-1004 www.ncma.com

Springfest Boat Show, MD

(410) 213-1121 www.ocfishing.com

May 6-7, 2000

Florida Sportsman Fishing Show, FL

(813) 839-7696 www.floridasportsman.com

May 18-21, 2000

Spring Boat Show USA, MI

(313) 884-1776 www.boatshowusa.net

May 19-21, 2000

St. Petersburg Spring Boat Show, FL

(800) 940-7642 www.showmanagement.com

Newport Used Boat Show, RI

(401) 846-1115 www.newportexhibition.com

June 2-6, 2000

South Florida Boat Show, FL

(800) 321-6164 www.soflaboatshow.com

June 7-9, 2000

NYS Spring Charter Yacht Trade Show, RI

(401) 846-7720 www.fineyachts.com

June 7-11, 2000

Annual Spring Boat Show - Los Angeles, CA

(714) 633-7581 www.scma.com

June 9-11, 2000

Sea and Land Boat Show, CT

(860) 395-0867 www.oldsaybrookct.com

June 15-28, 2000

Marina del Rey In-Water Boat Show, CA ☞

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Racine, Wisconsin, resident Bill Friedleib says, "It's about time someone put together a complete cruising guide for this area. The full-color layouts and the aerial photos are head and shoulders above any cruising guide I've seen. I've used my guide on two recent cruises and have enjoyed it thoroughly."

Buying one or more of these cruising guides provides the perfect introduction to Great Lakes boating. Whether you're heading to the Windy City by water or cruising up to Canada for some Great Lakes backcountry boating, it's a great start to a great adventure on and off the water.

Attention ABA Members!

Get your yearly subscription to *Lakeland Boating* for only \$11.00. That's almost a 50% savings (normally \$21.95)! Call 800-827-0289 and press 0 for a representative. Be sure to use source code ZABA. Save 10% off the *Ports O' Call* guides (normally \$44.95, you pay \$40.45 per guide plus shipping and handling.) Call 800-892-9342 and use source code ZABA.

DETAILS

As mentioned above, *Lakeland Boating* is a great resource for Great Lakes cruising. Regularly \$21.95, it's only \$11.00/year for ABA members. To order, call 800-827-0289 and press 0 for a representative. Be sure to use source code ZABA. Their *Ports O' Call* cruising guides are 'must-

haves' for the area. Regularly \$44.95, ABA members can get a 10% discount. To order the guides, call 800-892-9342. Be sure to use source code ZABA. Marine Navigation, 708-352-0606 in La Grange, Illinois, offers a huge selection of up-to-date Great Lakes charts, as well as information, advice, and charts for practically everywhere else in the world.

Upcoming Issues: Lake Michigan; Lake Huron; and the Gulf of Mexico ☞



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2. Take advantage of Royal Caribbean's 'Happy Hour'. Call the ABA hotline at 1-888-226-2100 every Tuesday afternoon to learn about our weekly specials at rock bottom prices.
3. Book your vacation by calling toll-free 1-888-226-2100 and reference your ABA membership.

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Dead Reckoning

What better phrase for an ancient art so filled with consequence for mariners? The estimation of a boat or ship's position from the distance run by the log and the course steered by the compass, with corrections for current, wind and tide, dead reckoning has been bringing sailors home - or leading them to misadventure - since before the Pilgrims came to Plymouth.

According to an 1891 article in the British journal *Nature*, "The log, which for the first time enabled the mariner to carry out his dead reckoning with confidence, is first described in Bourne's *Regiment for the Sea*, which was published in 1577." In his 1613 opus, *Magnetic Bodies*, M. Ridley first cited the term in print: "a true, not a dead reckoning of his course." Two and a half centuries later, Richard Henry Dana referred to the limitations of the art in *Two Years Before the Mast*. "We had drifted too much to allow for our dead reckoning being anywhere near the mark."

Keep Dana's comment in mind when the batteries fail on your GPS. This is not as exact a science as one might infer from the name. Standards have changed considerably in navigation since the days of Sir Francis Drake.

What hasn't changed all that much is the number of variables that can throw your travel plans into a cocked hat. The wind will change direction and speed. The ocean's flow will vary as you move from one current to another, or from one side of a current to the other. The weather can turn on a dime, and visibility can drop from the farthest planet to the hand at the

end of your arm. Add the effects of wave action and the evasive action required by boat traffic; you don't have to travel very far along a crowded, turbulent course before the best-laid plan is ancient history.

In his excellent book, *Basic Coastal Navigation*, Frank J. Larkin advises readers to check and record their position every half hour and to become familiar with such techniques as doubling the angle on the bow and beam bearing.

This is a method of estimating distance from a fixed object, but it works only if you can maintain a relatively stable speed. Start off by picking a marker such as a buoy or charted coastal tower, then bring your boat around to a bearing on that object of 45 degrees. Record the time. Then continue on your dead reckoning course until your bearing on the marker is 90 degrees, or directly abeam. The distance from the first bearing to the second should be equal to your distance from the marker. Compare that with the course you charted by dead reckoning, and correct accordingly.

Larkin also recommends tracking progress along the bottom by use of the depth sounder, and staying constantly aware of your position relative to the nearest harbor, especially in threatening weather.

If you intend to lay in a course over water by dead reckoning, the best place to do it is while still on dry land. You'll have enough on your hands once the light drops, the wind rises, the tide turns and the fixed object emerging directly off your bow turns out to be the *Wreck of the Mary Deare*. ☹

Boater Quiz

GPS: New Terms of the Plotter's Art

Navigation, like every other part of life afloat, has a specialized parlance of its own. This particular lexicon is growing faster than others due to advances in electronics and satellite communication - although some of the older entries have descended through centuries. Try matching terms related to GPS in the first section with definitions in the second. With acronyms, we have paraphrased to avoid the obvious.

GPS-ese

1. Auto Mag
2. Black-boxed
3. XTK
4. DOP
5. DMG
6. Mask Angle
7. Page
8. SIN
9. SOG
10. VMG

Plain English

- a. Caller ID for the eye in the sky
- b. Speed of closing a selected waypoint
- c. Cross track error; perpendicular distance from position to course line
- d. Built-in instructions for GPS to deliver magnetic courses and bearings
- e. How far traveled from last waypoint
- f. Ground speed (vs water speed)
- g. GPS screen
- h. Point where horizon or high land blocks satellite signal
- i. Frame on SIN denoting weak signal
- j. Quality measurement on accuracy of fix

Key to Answers 1d; 2i; 3c; 4j; 5e; 6h; 7g; 8a; 9f; 10b