

# Boat Show Junkie!

By Robert Janger

OK, OK, OK, I'll admit it. I am a boat show addict! I love going to boat shows. I start the boating season by going to the Bay Bridge Boat Show on Kent Island where it's been cold enough to wear a parka and end the season with the Annapolis Power Boat Show which has been so warm that it seemed more like August than October. I've also been known to cram in a few extra shows during the winter (DC, Baltimore, and Miami come immediately to mind).

Most likely, if there were two rowboats and three bamboo poles with bobbers on a dock somewhere, I'd probably haul out a twenty dollar bill to get in. In this article I'll tell you about a couple of recent shows we went to and how I wound up with half a toilet!

## I Got a Crappy Deal!

Last October we went to the Annapolis Powerboat show. We go every year but this year we decided to do it right: we came on Friday; stayed over the weekend; got a nice room at a historic B&B; spent the entire day Saturday attending the show; had a couple of nice dinners and came home on Sunday after a great outing.

My crappy deal came on Saturday at the boat show. One of my projects for this year is to replace the raw-water toilets with fresh-water units. I had been waiting for the Raritan Marine Elegance toilet to hit the market for months and so I looked to see if Raritan would have a booth at the show. This toilet is like the younger brother to the Atlantes Freedom but significantly less expensive. The macerator is not as strong as the Atlantes (which is like a bronze-bladed garbage disposal) but it is more than enough to handle any on-board situation. The thing I like most about the Marine Elegance (other than the price being about ½ the price of the Atlantes) is the size of the toilet. It's a perfect replacement for older compact heads like the twenty year old raw-water Crown heads that are currently in my 4207. It turns out that Raritan was indeed at the show and I got a chance to talk with a technician who was part of the manufacturing team. The toilet wasn't actually available until November but right next to the Raritan booth was a local distributor (what a coincidence) and I was able to place an order with them. I got an additional \$80 off the price of the toilet as a show special and since they didn't have any in stock yet, I gave them ½ the money with the understanding that I would pay the other ½ when the toilet came in to their store. And that's how I ended up buying half a toilet, at least until it finally arrived the end of December.

## Some are a Bust!

Some shows have a reputation of being a dud. The Baltimore boat show is like that, at least for me, anyway. We went this weekend for two reasons: 1) I had heard that the show had got better in the last few years that I avoided it and; 2) it *is* January, after all, my boat *is* up on blocks for this winter, and I'm looking for just about any boat-related outing that will get me through to April.

This show is also held very close to our house and that makes it attractive for us to attend. So we went again this year. The show is small, held in the convention center, and you can see the whole thing in about 4 hours. You can do it in a lot less if you're not planning on buying a boat. In all fairness, if you are planning on buying a boat in the 18-28 foot range, this is probably a great show to attend because you can get some good deals at this show; it being winter and all and sales folks being sales folks and all.

I happen to think this show is still a dud although there are always some interesting things at the Baltimore show you may not see anywhere else. Now really, how often do you get to see a flotilla of remote controlled sailboats that were powered by seven or eight 48" fans at the other end of the pool? There was even one pool where you could put your small child into a PFD and then into a pedal-powered boat just large enough for a 6-yr old to maneuver around the pool. The pool was less than 18 inches deep and the kids had a great time crashing into each other, sort of like bumper cars. I guess that sort of behavior starts younger than I thought.

In fact, the last time I was at this show, I saw Twiggy the water-skiing squirrel. It was quite amazing to see a gray squirrel water-skiing around a wading pool! Oh, I know some of you may scoff at the fact that the squirrel doesn't actually wear individual water skis but anybody that can teach a squirrel to hop on a little floating platform and get hauled around a twenty foot wading pool by a remote-controlled boat is OK in my book. I'm just sorry I didn't get my picture taken with Twiggy.

Well, that's it for now. I'll let you know how the toilet project and everything else works out. Keep your paper dry! (That's a toilet joke.)

I'll see you next time!

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