



For the  
**Love** WHAT'S TO LOVE ABOUT BOATING?  
LET ME COUNT THE WAYS....  
BY WENDY BONE  
of Boating



**I**s it the wind in my hair, the sun on my face or the sheer joy of escaping the everyday world? What exactly is it that makes boating feel so good? One of my favourite songs perhaps describes it best. It's called *Sailing*, by Christopher Cross, and the chorus goes like this:

*Sailing  
Takes me away  
To where I've always heard it could be  
Just a dream and the wind to carry me  
And soon I will be free*

He sure knew what he was talking about...one of the greatest things about boating is the feeling of freedom it gives you. Whether by sail or by power, nothing else gives you that same exhilarating sense of being free, out on the water, away from the cares of the world.

Boating is a family affair, too—a chance to do something together in the fresh air without television, video games or any of the other distractions of modern life that keep us separated from each other. Together, out in the natural world of sea and sky, skimming the water and exploring new places, we experience some of the most unforgettable family moments, and have the opportunity to really reconnect.

When my brother Gordon and I were kids, my parents began our



GREG SHEA, FLICKR



boating life with a 16-foot custom-built sailboat, and we spent many pleasant summer days cruising the Gulf Islands of the West Coast. My mom and dad would pack us, and our dog Whiskey, onto the boat and off we would go to sail the day away.

My favourite spot on the boat was on the bow, where Dad had assigned me the task of watching for those ever-ominous logs, or “deadheads,” that might poke a hole in our hull. It felt like such an important job that Dad had entrusted me with—after all, my family’s life depended on me! As I kept an ever-watchful eye, the sun warm on my face and fresh ocean air filling my lungs, Whiskey would accompany me, nose to the wind and ears flapping in the breeze. I could tell from the look in his eyes that he also felt that same sense of responsibility and importance, that he was guarding the family yet also feeling a part of the world that lay all around us. Seeing other creatures—a whale or an otter—was a thrill that added to the sense of connection that extended from our family to the rest of the world, including other boating families. When it was time for lunch or to do some exploring, we often tied up to log booms in Howe Sound, where we quickly made friends with other boating kids and their dogs, dinghying to shore for beachcombing and picnics. Those were some of the happiest days of my childhood.

But not everyone takes to boating like a duck to water—sometimes it takes a little coaxing. Though born into a family of boating enthusiasts, Bill Strong of Lewisporte, Newfoundland, says, “Initially I didn’t take well to sailing, no matter how hard my father tried to explain the physics of sailing to me. I was positive the boat, a 28-foot wooden sloop with a lead keel, would inevitably tip over.”

Eventually, though, he became passionate about boating: “Hiking out on the very edge of the deck with nothing holding onto you but the trapeze harness, you quickly learn to become one with the boat, skipper, wind and water. It’s the feeling of all efforts coming together for the greater whole that I achieve when sailing.”

Bill’s brother, Ted Strong, of Lower Coverdale, New Brunswick, grew up on an island off the east coast of Newfoundland and never knew life without boats. “I saw the transition from sail to engine-powered schooners,” he says. “My first boat was a 14-foot speedboat with a 50-horsepower Mercury outboard—great for waterskiing.”

What Strong loves about boating is that it takes him back to living at a basic level, and gives him the freedom to be wherever he

wants. “I could live on my boat yearlong,” he says. “You can live in a new neighbourhood any time you like...It’s quiet, peaceful and uninterrupted. I also love the scenery and being in control. Boating people are all at the same common denominator. You can go solo, with your dog, or with lots of friends.”

In an age when work demands so much of us and there are so many digital distractions, boating truly is a way to keep sane and, oddly enough, grounded. Barb Muir of Moncton, New Brunswick, says, “Boating is the best way I know to escape and relax. There’s nothing better than to spend a quiet summer’s night anchored in a sheltered harbour, excited by the good weather forecast, and making plans for the next day’s cruise...or having a meal on deck anchored off a beach on a warm day with enough of a gentle swell to cause the shoreline to come alive.”

I couldn’t agree more. Whether zipping over the waves in a powerboat or coasting them by sail, I always feel as though I’ve left my cares far behind to sink in the wake. Boating keeps me in the present moment, looking for deadheads or the heads of curious seals to pop up from the water’s surface. I guess that’s what I love most about boating—it brings me back to feeling one with the world again.

*It's not far back to sanity  
At least it's not for me  
And when the wind is right you can sail away  
And find serenity  
The canvas can do miracles  
Just you wait and see  
Believe me... ●*