

FISHERMEN'S VOICE

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News & Comment for and by the Fishermen of Maine

FREE

Rapped Knuckles

Solomon's Island. Never had the opportunity to run in or stop on a car trip. Heard it was a neat town but quite more touristy than many of the Chesapeake working towns. So, with the usual soupcon of Chesapeake Bay cruising, river currents, outgoing tide and a northeast wind on our nose, we were ready for a change of scenery. Some land-bound enjoyment of this Sunday section of Memorial Day weekend sounded good and Solomon's was just an hour off our course to Tilghman Island.

It was Memorial Day weekend alright. We'd seen a bunch of boats out fishing, but not quite prepared for the scene in Solomon's harbor of creeks. We had to get in line to get in the harbor then wait for a chance to cross traffic to port keeping a sharp and look out for sport fishers, crab boats, sails, canoes and kayaks. Everyone wanted to be on the water enjoying the 80+ degrees first day of mid-Atlantic boating. We worked our way around through the crowded anchorage, gawking till we dropped the hook well up in Back Creek. Nice area to stop. Calm and protected with enough breeze to keep the "J" cabins cooled in the evening.

Did a quick wash up. Launched dinghy over the back and with 5-horse Merc purring, we headed back to the action. Fifteen minutes later we'd chained the dinghy and contents to a bulkhead across from the Tiki Bar. This a serious watering hole (Multi-bars around a sand-filled quadrangle built to look like a south Pacific strip mall complete with Polynesian statues of somber gods and disdainful visage, all looking over crazy white man drinking Mai Tais and Bud Light). We found our way around the corner to Solomon's main street of gift shops, restaurants, and boardwalk with a beautiful view of the Patuxent River, and a Skyscraper Bridge on the westerly end of the street. Nice but not much there and full of tourists. Would imagine the local residents much enjoyed their peaceful winters.

We had a bit of libation on Solomon's Wharf, debated on an early dinner of rockfish nuggets, then decided for more upscale at Zahnhiser's 'Lookout' restaurant. The Tiki Bar was still standing-room-only. Too loud and rocking so we collected the dinghy which for some reason had partially deflated causing us to slither over the smallest ripples as we motored back up the creek. 'Lookout' had killer martinis and a great spot but no local fish on the menu. We were now at 'Plan C' and beginning to get a tad hungry. Toast and tea at breakfast had worn off much earlier.

Folks at the 'Lookout' suggested 'Stoney's Kingfisher' a few blocks back toward town (or 5-minute dinghy ride). We opted to walk.

Great suggestion. We enjoyed fried rockfish (striped bass to us northerners), cole slaw and fries. Excellent, moist, light breading, just the way it should be.

“What’s next,” AJ asked, “it’s still early and too beautiful a night for Scrabble.”

“Ah-hah, a surprise is in order. Let’s re-inflate the dinghy and do a slow cruise around the creeks.”

With camera in hand, sun headed for the trees, yours truly with legs draped over the opposite side, and AJ propped in the bow on cushions and life jacket, we poked into every waterway we could find. Abandoned boats, blue heron, the sunset, and “Helen J” were all recorded as we putted around, thoroughly enjoying the downtime and a sultry evening.

One mistake though. We’d bought the new dinghy at a yard sale in Florida and never registered it. Figured on waiting till Maine.

I’d seen the police boats and the C.G. Auxiliary that afternoon but they’d not seemed too interested in us, so had forgotten all about numbers and correlations, “This was a No-No.”

Must have been our casual posture. Not even sure they could see much more than the little black Merc. We were virtually upon the patrol boat before the officers’ defined life aboard and with a wave of the hand from one and a slight sinking feeling on the rockfish dinner; I pulled our evening entertainment alongside. It was their job. I was wrong. Keep head down. Say ‘yes sir’, ‘no sir’. One asked for name, rank, and horsepower (didn’t even have my driver’s license). Asked if we had a noise-making device aboard (I almost whistled—not a good thing), and I said, “No sir, we were just on a creek cruise. Got a flashlight though.” Amazing what they knew about my social security number. Hate to think I’d had any traffic violations. Might have wound up in a dry land berth that night.

Dinner was a lot less costly than the cruise. Quite memorable though. And what I get for writing this article won’t begin to pay the fine.

From the kitchen of dear friend Aly Munzenreider. Try this for your July 4th, salmon and fresh peas (guess this year the peas will be imported).

Barbecued Salmon

1 T. butter
1 T. honey
1 T. firmly packed brown sugar
2 T. soy sauce

3 T. Dijon mustard
1 T. olive oil
1 t. minced fresh ginger

Melt butter in pan with honey and sugar until blended. Add remaining ingredients. Cool.

1 large salmon filet with skin – about 4 pounds.

Place salmon, skin side down, on heavy foil. Trim foil to fit fish. Set fish and foil on a cookie sheet. Spoon sauce over salmon. Let sit for one hour, often basting sauce over fish. Preheat grill. Slide salmon and foil onto grill over indirect heat. Cook until salmon is opaque but still moist—about 20 minutes.

Fair winds and good roads.

Lee S. Wilbur