

Bent Prop Award nomination - Doug Folkert

Doug is Almost Gator Bait!

At many of our anchorages on the Great Loop so far, we often put out both a bow and stern anchor, especially if the river is very narrow or if there is a lot of current. Right before we got to Mobile, we anchored in Big Bayou Canot (we still have not figured out what a Canot is!). This was a nice anchorage - in the middle of nowhere, and you could almost here the banjos playing in the background. As we were in Alabama, this was back in gator country, and the highlight of this anchorage was a big ole dead gator up around the bend. So of course, no one planned to go swimming!

We had several of our buddy boats with us, and Doug had gone around in the dinghy helping everyone with their stern anchors. He is becoming quite skilled at anchoring, so everyone was grateful for his assistance. After making sure all were secure, he then decided to tweak up our line. He had purchased a knot book in Chicago, so decided to make a rear bridle to hold the anchor a little better. He got the book out, studied it, and came up with a great bridle, with the anchor line then coming off the middle of the boat rather than the side. We were held to perfection, and after potluck and Mexican train at one of the other boats, we dinghied back, ducked under the bridle, and secured the dinghy.

The next morning, as we were preparing to head on out to Dog River Marina in Mobile, we did our morning preparations - check the engine and oil, sea strainers, turn on GPS and computer navigation software, coordinate with the other boats, etc etc. All looked good to go. Time to hoist the anchors!

Our usual routine is to pull the stern anchor first. Doug will hop in the dinghy and motor out to it, pull up the trip line, and then I stand on the rear deck and pull in the anchor until Doug gets back and helps with the final lifting. Doug heads back to the rear of the boat, and I do last minute weather, fuel and water checks and get ready to fire up the engine. I complete my tasks and start back to see how Doug is progressing.

The rear door is open, and as I near it all of a sudden I see the front end of the dinghy fly up in the air, straight up and down and pointed towards the sky! Almost simultaneously I hear a big yell, and an even bigger splash! I go running out, and lo and behold, there is Doug, floundering in the water while the dinghy heads on its own toward shore!!!! Turns out when he stepped into the dinghy he got caught trying to duck under his fancy dancy bridle, and got totally off balance, and into the drink he went!

The dinghy is going one way, Doug is splashing around, and we can both envision all the gators heading over, hearing their tasty morsel of a breakfast in the water and ready for the taking! Doug swims after the dinghy, gives it a shove towards me to catch it, which I did, and then makes a beeline for the swim platform. I grab the dinghy and help him up. As it was a cool morning, he had his jeans and hoody on, so is about 15 pounds heavier than normal. But at least he kept his hat dry! And luckily, we did not see any gators!

Moral of the story: Beware of the web you weave - you may get caught in it!

