

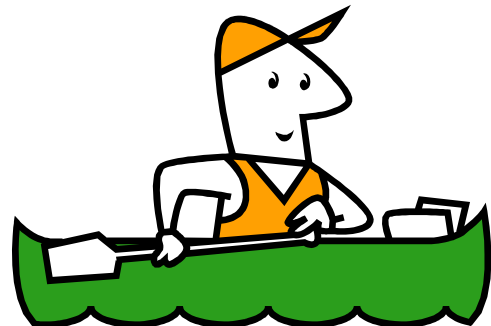
“Floater Boater”

Where I came up with the title is beyond me; *on the fly*, I guess – but it describes any Bio-dad who has a boat, has ridden on a boat (or ship), or may sometimes want to take a boat...to China or somewhere distant.

My most distant memory of a boat was probably the when I went aboard the aircraft carrier, “sinking” Sara in Jacksonville Florida. Of the day’s events, the most vivid – and scary – was taking an aircraft elevator from the flight deck to lower deck. Until you’ve taken an aircraft elevator, you haven’t lived! Imagine a section of highway moving beneath you and you’ll have the general idea. Rumbblings so strong as to drive a youngster to his knees; yep, I hit the deck.

Besides the aircraft carrier, my off-shore experiences were limited to a few excursions on the lake; or more specifically, going fishing or venturing with my kinfolds in Alabama. Whether a basic aluminum boat or some fabulous bass boat, the experience was rather calm compared to the carrier.

One of my most enjoyable experiences on Weiss Lake was canoeing; yes, it does require exercise but sometimes the simple things are the most enjoyable or relaxing. The cool thing about canoeing was that you could paddle up to any shoreline (as long as it wasn’t private property) and go ashore. There might be an island –



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believe it our not – or some old campground; whatever the reason – if there had to be – the canoe allowed for easy access and off-boarding. Furthermore, you could pick the vessel up if you needed to and carry out to the next point.

When I mention “simple things”, I am not kidding; that canoe cost my dad a few bucks and a six-pack of beer. It may not have been close to Old Town, but it floated...without leaks. Oh, and his deal included two paddles too.

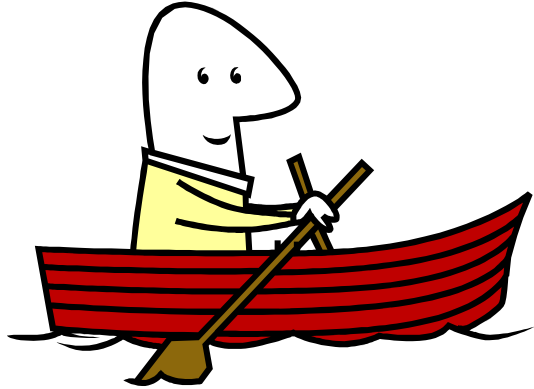
Beyond the lake and my childhood, my boating experiences have comprised a cruise and a few kayaking and rafting trips. I never go on another cruise again; it just wasn't my idea of fun and, beside, you spend much of the time just eating.

The rafting trips were great! On two different trips – and classes of rivers – my experience occurred in North Georgia. The first rafting trip was the most challenging and, yes, I fell out of the raft...more than once. If I had the chance to go again, I would do it. It was by far the best boating trip I've ever had.

The second rafting trip was on a less difficult course – but lots of fun just the same. Some interesting trivia about this river: a railroad track running adjacent to the river was used for the train accident in the movie, *The Fugitive*, with Harrison Ford. What I remember most was how cold the water was; yes, I fell in...more than once.



With limited sea-duty (lake, river...), I am convinced that being on the water – any water – has its pleasure. I'm



not really interested in taking a boat to China – not even a slow boat – but would not pass-up the pleasure of a day's rowing or canoeing as before. Why, I would even go down the creek in an inner-

tube just for the chance to cool down on a hot day and take in the beauty of the surroundings. Whatever the vessel and wherever the water, I like being a floater boater.