



On The Bay

with Wayne Baddock

COUNTRY STYLE

A month ago I was contacted by a guy from a rural town near Balingup, wanting a skipper's ticket for his family. He sounded genuine over the phone and indicated it was difficult to travel to Bunbury on my scheduled course dates. He had made prior arrangements with a neighbor to use his dam for the practical, so I organised to come to his rural property and deliver a private course. It was also a great opportunity to enjoy that beautiful stretch of road from Nannup to Balingup.

I arrived at the pre-arranged location, near the dam, and soon enough three guys turned up in a farm ute, towing a dinghy that looked like it has just come from the tip. We chatted for ten minutes or so and I quickly realised that this was going to be a long day, but no worries, I was up for it. Like many others, they were very anxious about being assessed and had obviously spent many hours studying the RST Workbook and attempting the practical tasks in their clapped out dinghy which had broken down twice in the middle of the dam. Before we began the theory at their house, they were proud as punch about their custom made 'jetty' on the dam and just had to show me. They had used a large luggage roof rack off a truck, attached padded upright posts to the corners and strapped two forty four gallon drums to one end, to keep it afloat. A couple of star pickets in the other end to keep the 'jetty' secured to the bank and Bob's your uncle!

On arrival at the house, it was plain to see where the inspiration had come for the 'jetty'. Even though they were on ten acres, there was not one metre of spare room, as this was obviously a hoarder's paradise, or rather a home full of memorabilia. I'm talking ten old outboards, four boats, a sailing catamaran, at least twenty vehicles dating back to the 50's, trucks, buses, tractors, you name it, they had it. I had to park my truck and boat on the roadside, because there was no room on their ten acres for me. On entering the house, it was obvious they had gone to a lot of effort to fit me in a room to teach, with books and assorted bric a brac piled all the way to the roof. Everyone was ever so polite and hospitable though, with another two family

members gathering around to tell their stories while I was setting up. The young daughter, only ten years of age, had been asking the practice study questions to her brother, father and grandfather, to help them pass the test. Yes, this was three generations doing the course, grandfather, father and son, with the oldest being 73 years of age. Grandad retold old timber mill stories and had obviously had a very tough life. It was revealed that the youngest was dyslexic and had for years struggled at school. I dismissed this as no issue whatsoever, as I would not be testing his reading and writing, but rather his knowledge with an oral assessment. Later in the day I was to discover that the father had cancer and was trying to make the most of his life while he could and take the kids fishing. We laughed and joked our way through the theory and they made easy for me because they had studied hard and achieved 38, 39 and 40, with grandad topping the class. Because they had battled so hard in their tiller controlled, clapped out dinghy, my training vessel was a breeze for them and all passed with flying colors. When we drove home, laughing all the way, we reminded ourselves that sometimes the simple things in life are the most important.

To answer last week's question an octogenarian is someone 80-89 years of age. This week's question is, 'What does the term "Tiller Towards Trouble" mean?'

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