

It's Launch Time at Belle Maer!

After the winter of 2006/07 finally took hold in January, it gave us a hearty dose of what we expected all along: a cold, blustery, windy, long and dark Michigan winter.

And our collective dream of blue skies and boating bliss seemed like just that – a dream – that was a long way off. But hark! It's time to think about launch!

After being treated to a couple of record-breaking warm days at the end of March, it now actually feels like spring. And at Belle Maer, you're sure to get Spring fever once you start thinking about getting your boat back in the water and seeing the boating neighbors you haven't seen in six months.

If you need something to get you in the mood, you can heat up by getting your watercraft ship shape and ready to launch. In this issue, we have some information and insights to share on docking and rope care, downloadable charts, live weather data, safer boating and much more.

Spring launch at Belle Maer officially began April 2nd, when our first boat went in the water, and in the interest of helping you "get wet" ASAP, we want to offer you some knowledge, practical assistance, good ideas – plus a few reminders to consider...

Please Help Keep Belle Maer Clean and Safe

Please remember that sanding work can be performed by individual boat owners only if it is done inside one of the designated shops or if a vacuum sander is used (with the residue properly disposed of). For your convenience, a vacuum sander can be rented through the marina office.

As part of our Environmental Master Plan, every boat at Belle Maer Harbor is required to have a BIOSOK (or generic equivalent) installed to prevent oil or fuel from being pumped overboard from the bilge. For your convenience, BIOSOKs can be purchased in the marina office.

Don't Forget to Register Your Golf Cart

Please remember that all golf carts must be registered with the marina. Please obtain a registration form from the office; it states the rules and regulations for driving the cart on marina property. After you complete and return the form, your permit will be issued. The permit must be affixed to your cart in order to use it within the marina.

Contractors Need to Pay Nominal Fee

Again this year, all outside contractors are required to pay a \$20 per day charge or \$200 per calendar year to be permitted to work inside the marina. The fee is necessary to help defray the cost of utilities and marina services used by these contractors while they are servicing boats inside the marina. Since the Condominium owners reimburse for their share of such services as road repairs, rubbish removal and water, the contractor fees are shared with the Condominium Association.

Contractors who regularly work inside Belle Maer Harbor will likely choose to pay the \$200 annual fee and treat it as a cost of doing business. If your contractor tries to profit from this procedure by charging all customers a \$2 daily surcharge, you might wish to check with the marina office to find other contractors who are not directly passing these costs to you.



Proof that it's launch time: Solar buoys 1 and 2 marking the entrance channel sit on a barge waiting to be deployed soon, along with the other buoys marking the channel.

Your Launch Checklist

- Please schedule your launch early by calling the office to make an appointment.
- You MUST launch by Friday, May 25, 2007.
- If you must reschedule your launch appointment, the office needs a 24 hour notice.
- Any boat leaving the harbor must be removed by April 15 or it will be subject to daily storage charges.
- Please arrive in the office a half hour early on the day of launch to pick up your paperwork.

Hints from the Harbormaster

When you remove your shrink wrap, please place it under your boats timbers and we will dispose of it.

Please bear in mind that your boat must not be plugged in while on land unless it is attended.

When they are open, your exhaust and side vents create dangerous places for birds to nest, so please keep them covered until you launch. It will protect both the birds and your boat!

In the interest of odor control for the entire marina, it is highly recommended that all boaters use a chemical odor deterrent in their holding tanks. One popular choice is "Odorless," a 68 ounce container which is priced at about \$20.00. Each use only requires 4-5 ounces. Of course, there are many other choices – but please sure to select one, as a great way of keeping friends and making new ones around the marina!

If you are experiencing electrical problems at your boat, there are two breakers you should check. The first is on the pedestal at your dock. The second is located in the electrical meter box located on your row. Your well number appears above the meter and the breaker is positioned beneath it. If these are both turned on and the problem still persists, please contact the harbor office or security. We will fill out a "Service Request" to get the problem resolved as quickly as possible.

What the Heck Are Those Orange Balls?

Most boaters may not have noticed it, but there are high tension electrical wires suspended on the west side of the Conger Bay Drive bridge – wires that supply the electricity to our Belle Maer "island." Too often in the past, swans have been unable to see these wires and the result hasn't been pretty. Swans have been killed flying into the high tension wires, and usually, the power to BMH is interrupted for several hours.

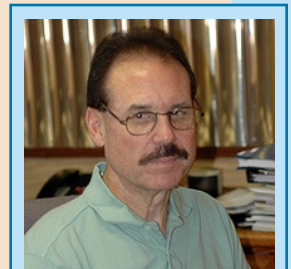
To prevent this from reoccurring, we have installed orange balls along the tension wires that function much like those seen around small airports so pilots can see wires and obstructions. Now our swan "pilots" will see the wires and will live to fly another day!



Eric Foster Treks to Lansing To Express Legislative Concerns

As a member of the Michigan Boating Industries Association (MBIA) Board of Directors, BMH Managing Partner Eric Foster finds himself in some interesting company doing some interesting things.

During the week of March 19th, for example, Eric traveled to Lansing with MBIA President Van W. Snider, Jr. to meet with a legislative committee considering a new marina tax. The committee is considering the possibility of levying a per-slip tax of \$20.00 annually. Eric and Van made the trip to present their position on this important matter – another tax or fee that potentially could take a bite out of boating.



Eric Foster

Belle Maer Boaters Welcomed By Numerous Improvements

Boaters returning to Belle Maer this spring will find a multitude of improvements in the marina:

Swimming Pool Expansion – Boaters will quickly notice that the size of the concrete deck has been increased by more than 80 percent, and a new liner and tiles are being added to the pool. New furniture is also being added. New landscaping and fencing are also being installed, so the Belle Maer pool area will look brand new!

Replacing entire 150 foot section of the sea wall at the rack building launch area. Editor's Note: Frost Law Restrictions have delayed the transportation and laying of the cement pad adjacent to the rack building. This may, in turn, result in a delay in the opening of rack building operations. We do not anticipate the delay to be longer than one week.

Dredging the channel into the lake to deepen the shoaling area near the entrance channel (near the orange floats).

Resurfacing the tennis basketball courts including repairing the cracks, repaving and resealing and installing new tennis court and basketball court striping and coloring.

Commercial painting of the remainder of the marina buildings in the new color scheme. Included as part of this effort are power washing and staining of both bathhouse buildings, along with the Duffy's Landing.

Replacing coin operated washers and dryers in the bath house building.

Shoring up the underpinning on the bridge to protect its structural integrity.

Addition of orange balls on bridge high tension wires to protect swans in flight.

Addition of monofilament line at Lake St. Clair shoreline to prevent the overpopulation of Canada Geese and reduce or eliminate goose droppings.



Newly replaced 150 foot section of sea wall at the rack building launch area.



The pool bath house has been power washed and is now awaiting a new coat of solid stain

Harbormaster Jim Krause Adds Captain's License to Credentials

BMH Harbormaster Jim Krause works hard all winter to ensure Belle Maer boaters return to safer and more attractive environment in the spring. But this year, he added something else to his to-do list: he signed up for training as a Captain, and now holds the coveted "100 ton license" (in addition to his airplane pilot license, which he's had for some time).

"The boats we have around Belle are just toys compared to what we learned to operate in the course," Jim says. "We learned to operate 200 meter power driven vessels – freighters."

Jim admits to being dismayed by the lack of knowledge and experience many novice mariners have ("all you need to do is write a check to buy a boat," he says). Now, armed with Captain's credentials and license, he is authorized to instruct individuals on the safe and proper operation of their boat.

He also will be able to legally assist boat owners in moving their boat. He is considering helping dealers demo and/or deliver boats on his days off or during the off season.

As part of the Captain's license requirements, students need to be able to prove their time at sea operating or assisting on a vessel. The Coast Guard determines the type and tonnage of the license based on your sea time and vessel tonnage experience; the requirement for a 100 ton license is 720 days, 360 of the 720 days must be on vessels 35 tons or greater.

"I might even go to the extent of getting a license to marry people, so if someone wants to get married out at the gazebo I'll be able to do that," he says.



Jim Krause

Green Area near 'N' Row to Be Protected from Goose "Land Mines"

If you've ever tried to stroll or throw a frisbee around or view the fireworks from the grassy area between Nautilus Row and the Lake St. Clair shoreline, you'll appreciate this marina improvement.

After consulting with the Department of Environmental Quality and other conservationists, Eric Foster and Jim Krause are solving the problem of too many Canadian Geese and too many of their "land mines." The solution is relatively simple: stringing lengths of monofilament line in six inch intervals between stakes along the shoreline area (between the grass and the rocks).

"Our studies have shown that geese are using the rocks to walk from the lake to the grassy areas they love," Jim says. "For six to eight weeks the adults lose their flight feathers and can't fly away, so they use N Row as the place where they eat, sleep and well, you know what else. We believe this transparent 'fence' is a great way of solving the goose problem without harming the views at all."

"Canada geese and their droppings represent a serious e-coli bacteria risk," adds Eric. "That's the primary reason you see the beach closures at Metro Park and other places where geese have easy access to climb between the water and the land. We believe our fence solution will help make the grassy areas in the marina safer and far more conducive to all types of recreation."

Eric and Jim are asking for the cooperation of marina residents by not attracting or feeding the geese.

There's Still Time to Introduce Friends to Belle Maer, Earn \$500 Credit

Belle Maer is continuing to offer a \$500 credit to our current customers for each new boater they sponsor who leases a Belle Maer Harbor rental well for the '07 season. (This offer excludes the lease of condominium wells which are not owned by Belle Maer Harbor or the lease of in and out rack storage.)

The \$500 credit can be taken in full by the sponsor, or the credit can be split between the sponsor and the new boater if the sponsor so instructs our office.

So, if you have a boating friend at another marina, why not suggest they check out Belle Maer? Once you have asked them to consider Belle Maer Harbor, call our office at (586) 465-4534 or email Eric Foster at ecfoster@bellemaer.com and register their name as your contact. We will then mail out a brochure and information packet.

So why not take this opportunity to recruit your boating friends to join you at the best marina on Lake St. Clair while reducing your dockage costs at the same time?

Marinas.com Web Site: New Source For Trip Planning – Even Framed Art

A new marine website can help boaters with planning trips – even getting framed photography of your favorite marina (like Belle Maer, of course).

Marinas.com includes low altitude, high-resolution aerial photographs of marinas from all over the world. Users can navigate the waterways with an interactive mapping database, viewing important detailed aerial photographs of key inlets, harbors, bridges, all the important marinas and exciting features including lighthouses, landmarks and restaurants.

The web site has a frame shop allows you to build your own framed and matted custom framed photo and preview it on your computer screen before ordering. You can jump right to the Belle Maer Harbor portion of their web site by following this link (you'll see five new aerial photos which you can zoom in on; the photos are so recent of such high quality, you might even find your own boat with your car parked adjacent to it):

<http://marinas.com/view/marina/2768>

New BMH Web Site Banner and Classified Ad Program Announced

Eric Foster has announced an advertising program on the Belle Maer web site which expands marketing opportunities for individuals and businesses alike.

The program is designed to take Classified Ads out of the newsletter and post them on the web site itself – giving each advertiser the exposure we receive with 6,500 monthly "hits" on the site. Here are the details:

Classified Ad Program (for Individuals):

- We will create a prominent Personal Classified Ad click-on section on our home page (these will no longer be part of the e-newsletter, and will run independent of our e-newsletter postings.
- The ads will be placed as they come into our office and run for a specified time frame. Donna Kempt of the marina office will collect the ad fee.
- Our new charge will be \$20 for two months and \$35 for a four month term. There is no refund if the item sells early.
- Classified Ads in this section should all be personal ads of 35 words or less.

Banner Ad Program (for Businesses):

- Businesses can purchase Banner Ads which will be run on a calendar year basis. We can accommodate a new banner ad at any time of the year. Animated, custom designed Banner Ads rotate throughout the BMH web site and the e-newsletter, providing optimum exposure to the 6,500 hits the web site receives per month.
- Cost for the Annual Banner Ad is only \$500 for the entire year.

Please call Donna Kempt at the Belle Maer marina office for more information or to run your ad.

National Safe Boating Week May 19-25 Reminds Boaters to Wear Their PFDs

It's too hot! It doesn't look cool. I know how to swim. Nothing is going to happen to me. These are just some of the many reasons people claim that they do not wear their life jackets. But with approximately 700 people drowning each year from recreational boating accidents, it is imperative for you to wear your life jacket at all times while you are on the water. Life jackets are no longer the orange, hot and bulky vests that are commonly associated with on the water safety gear. New innovations and developments in life jackets have produced a smaller, sleeker, and much more comfortable version of a life jacket, leaving you with no reason not to wear it.



Much like a helmet to a biker or skate boarder, life jackets are an essential part of your boating safety equipment and should be worn at all times while on the water. In 2004, of the 676 recreational boating fatalities, 90 percent of those victims were not wearing life jackets. Life jackets are now lighter, less obtrusive and more attractive than ever before. The new inflatable life jackets or Personal Flotation Devices allows you the mobility and flexibility that you need when boating, fishing, paddling or hunting and are much cooler in the warmer weather. There are many different varieties of inflatable jackets ranging from those that inflate instantly when you hit the water to those that are manually inflated. All are designed to be more comfortable and wearable than the traditional life jacket.

Accidents can happen at an alarming speed anyplace or anytime you are on the water. Although many boaters stow life jackets on their boat, very few choose to wear it. There just isn't time to grab a life jacket and put it on properly before you are in the water. If you are faced with a strong current or unfavorable weather conditions you will not only have trouble making sure you are safe and secure in your life jacket, but you will be unable to help your friends, relatives, children or passengers that have accompanied you in your boat. Wearing your life jacket will allow you to be safe in case of an accident and will also allow you the ability to assist others that may be in danger.

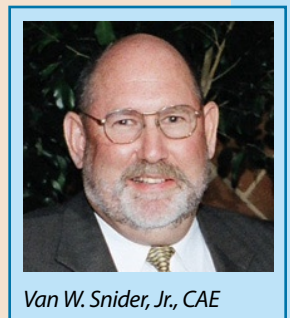
This year during National Safe Boating Week, and throughout the boating season remember to practice safe and responsible boating, always wear your life jacket, and be alert and aware while on the water. By practicing these simple steps you can save your life as well as the lives of the people boating with you. Life jackets are now more comfortable and lightweight than ever, with many new styles to fit the style you want. Safe boating saves lives so for this year's National Safe Boating Week and throughout the boating season remember to Boat Smart. Boat Safe.

President of MBIA Joins BMH Community

Van W. Snider, Jr., CAE, president of the Michigan Boating Industries Association, along with his wife, Betsy, will be calling Belle Maer Harbor their "home port" this summer, says Eric Foster, who serves on the Board of the MBIA. Van and Betsy will be "taking up residence" in one of the condo wells.

Van is responsible for the overall management of the MBIA. Van spends much of his time working on legislation, boat shows, member issues and industry relations. Van holds a BBA from Ohio University and an MBA from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. He is a Certified Association Executive and joined the MBIA in 1990.

Let's all welcome Van and Betsy to their new home away from home!



Lake St. Clair Water Levels Up 6 Inches; Forecasted Levels Similar to Last Year

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reports that as of March 30, the water levels in Lake St. Clair are up 6 inches over that of the same time last year.

Lake Erie's water level is up 7 inches above last year and Lake Ontario is at similar levels to last year. Lake Superior is 12 inches below its level of one year ago, while Lake Michigan and Lake Huron are one inch lower than a year ago.

All of the Great Lakes are at the end of their annual decline, and are forecasted to rise 1 to 4 inches over the next month. Water levels on Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, Erie and Ontario are expected to be similar to last year.

Boating Guests Coming for the Weekend? Invite Them to Stay Nearby – Right at Belle Maer

Because of the great response last summer, we are making designated transient wells available to visiting boaters on weekends again this summer. For all Belle Maer transient wells, reservations must be made in advance, and transient passes will be made available upon their arrival.

Minimum stay on a regular weekend is two nights, and on holiday weekends three nights.

Prices and slips are:

25' x 10' Slip - \$35/day (T6, T7, T8, T9, T10)

30' x 11' Slip - \$40/day (A Row, W Row)

30' x 12' Slip - \$40/day (A Row)

30' x 14' Slip - \$40/day (C Row)

35' x 15' Slip - \$45/day (as available, see marina office)

40' x 16' Slip - \$55/day (N Row, wells have 50 amp service)

60' x 19' Slip - \$65/day (B Row, wells have 50 amp service)

4th of July Weekend – prices are doubled

Transient guests must pay in advance. Checks are accepted only if mailed three weeks before stay. Pool passes are available for \$10 per day with a \$50 deposit; paid in advance. Charges will be deducted from deposit and balance returned when pool card is returned.

Five Rules for Painless Docking

As we gear up for the annual rite of relearning how to properly dock our boats, these suggestions from Bob Adriance at Boat/U.S. may prove helpful. Here are his Five Rules for Avoiding Injuries when docking:

Rule #1: Make sure everyone understands what he or she will be doing before you begin docking. The corollary to Rule 1 is that you should be aware of where your crew is and what each is doing. A woman in California was securing a spring line to a cleat when the skipper suddenly backed down hard with his twin 200-hp engines and she got her fingers crushed. Another man was standing on the dock holding onto a trawler's bow pulpit when the skipper gunner the engine and yanked him into the water. In both claims (and many others) the skipper and crew were acting independently.

Rule #2: Discourage crew from making Olympian leaps onto the dock. This is one of the most common types of accidents. A California man, to cite one example, broke both his heels when he landed on the dock after jumping from the bow of a large sailboat. Whenever possible, hand dock lines to someone on the dock. If that isn't possible, wait until the boat is safely alongside the pier before instructing someone to step ashore. Your crew shouldn't have to make daring leaps across open water to make up for sloppy boat handling.

Rule #3: Keep fingers and limbs inboard! As a boat gets close to a dock, passengers tend to gravitate toward the rail and drape fingers, legs and arms over the side. If the boat suddenly swings into a dock or piling, the consequences can be painful. A woman in Solomon's Island, MD, lost a finger when a passing boat's wake slammed her boat into a piling.

Rule #4: Make sure everyone is seating or has something to hold on to. The owner of a 20-foot runabout asked his inexperienced nephew to jump onto the dock with a bow line. The young man eagerly climbed out of his seat and stood precariously on the bow as the boat was approaching the dock. A few seconds later the boat glanced off of a piling, only slightly, but without a handhold the nephew lost his balance and fractured his elbow.

Rule #5: Don't use bodies to stop the boat. A Florida man suffered a separated shoulder when he tried to keep a 38-foot sportfisherman from backing into a piling. Slow down, way down, and use fenders.

Skipper Bud's Plans Special Event, Rendezvous Trips for Summer

According to Tom Walker, sales manager for Skipper Bud's at Belle Maer, this will be an action-packed summer filled with special events and rendezvous trips from May through August.

"On June 9th, we are going to be doing a cross promotion with Suburban Motors – the Bentley, Maserati and Lamborghini dealer – to bring four or five of their exotic cars here," Tom explains. "At the same time, we're going to have our 59' Marquis and our 62' Azimut in the water – along with our new Carver 52' Voyager. We'll be having food and refreshments and it should be a lot of fun."

In addition, Skipper Bud's is also planning three rendezvous cruises:

June 23-24 - Port of Lexington

July 21-22 - Marina Del Isle – a Skipper Bud's owned facility in Ohio

August 18-19 - Cove Marina in Tilbury, Ontario

"On the cruises, we'll depart on Friday and come back on Sunday," Tom says. "We have planned some shorter and more affordable trips for people – but the destinations are great and we'll have a lot of activities planned."

For more information, call Tom Walker at (586) 954-3100.



59' Marquis: Docked Here June 9th with Exotic Cars

Guide to NOAA Chart Downloads

Now boaters can download any or all of NOAA's 1,000 U.S. nautical charts free of charge, according to a recent article in Boat/U.S. Magazine. They note that anyone with a Macintosh or PC computer and a reasonably fast internet connection can download official nautical charts that can be used with a variety of charting software. And since the charts are direct from NOAA, the U.S. government's hydrographer, they are "official" – there is no need for the usual chartplotter warning that the chart is not legal for navigation.

The free downloadable NOAA charts are available in two formats, Raster Navigation Chart (RNC), the chart you are used to reading which is a scanned image of the original paper chart, or an Electronic Navigation Chart (ENC), a vector chart which is the type you are likely to be using in a chartplotter.

The computer software required to decode and view either RNCs or ENCs is readily available for both PCs and Macs (some programs can handle both formats).

Don't expect the free chart you download to work in your dedicated GPS-chartplotter, as most of these products accept only 7 proprietary electronic chart cartridges such as those produced by C-Map, Navionics, Nobletech, etc.

The NOAA charts are easy to access and download from the NOAA Office of Coast Survey Web site at <http://chartmaker.ncd.noaa.gov>

Real Time Live Cam at Belle Maer

If you need to check out the water or weather at the marina, all you need to do is to log on to the live cam at Duffy's Landing (unless they are having technical difficulties, which sometimes can happen). There, positioned so it looks straight out the channel, is a real time live cam that gives you a view of the lake – and is updated every 15 seconds. Plus, you'll see boats coming, going – even gassing up at the dock. It's a fun way to keep in touch.

Just log on at:

http://www.lakestclair.net/web_cams/duffys_cam.htm



Swans ham it up for the web cam at Duffy's Landing.

How to Care for Your Ropes

Lt. Eugene Johnson of the Captree, New York, U.S. Power Squadron, offers a few suggestions on how to keep ropes strong and durable. He says you will need to inspect and maintain them periodically.

Hold up an arm's length of rope at critical points and examine it for chafe, cuts, broken strands and other deformations. If you find cut strands, chafe or a 10 percent loss in diameter, you should cut off the damaged part or replace the rope. Annually, or more often if necessary, cut back or reverse anchor rodes and other lines that wear more at one end.

Dirt, salt, rust and corrosion can abrade rope fibers, which shortens the life of your line. To prevent chafe, occasionally wash rope with fresh water. But don't use detergents unless you need to remove oil or grease, because they may remove preservatives and lubricants that help reduce friction on the rope. Adding a little fabric softener to the water when soaking the line will restore some of the rope's suppleness.

Live Weather & Wave Data On Line

If you're planning to throw off the lines and need to find out what wave height and wind is going to greet you when you enter Lake Huron, Lake Erie – or virtually anywhere in the world – you'll want to check out the National Data Buoy Center.

At this web site, you can access live data from special buoys positioned all over the Great Lakes – including Lake St. Clair, Lake Huron and Lake Erie. Log on to specific buoy reports and get real time wave heights, wind speed and direction, water and air temperature, marine forecasts for those areas and more.

You can start your journey by logging on to the Lake St. Clair buoy at:

www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station_page.php?station=45147