

PropTalk

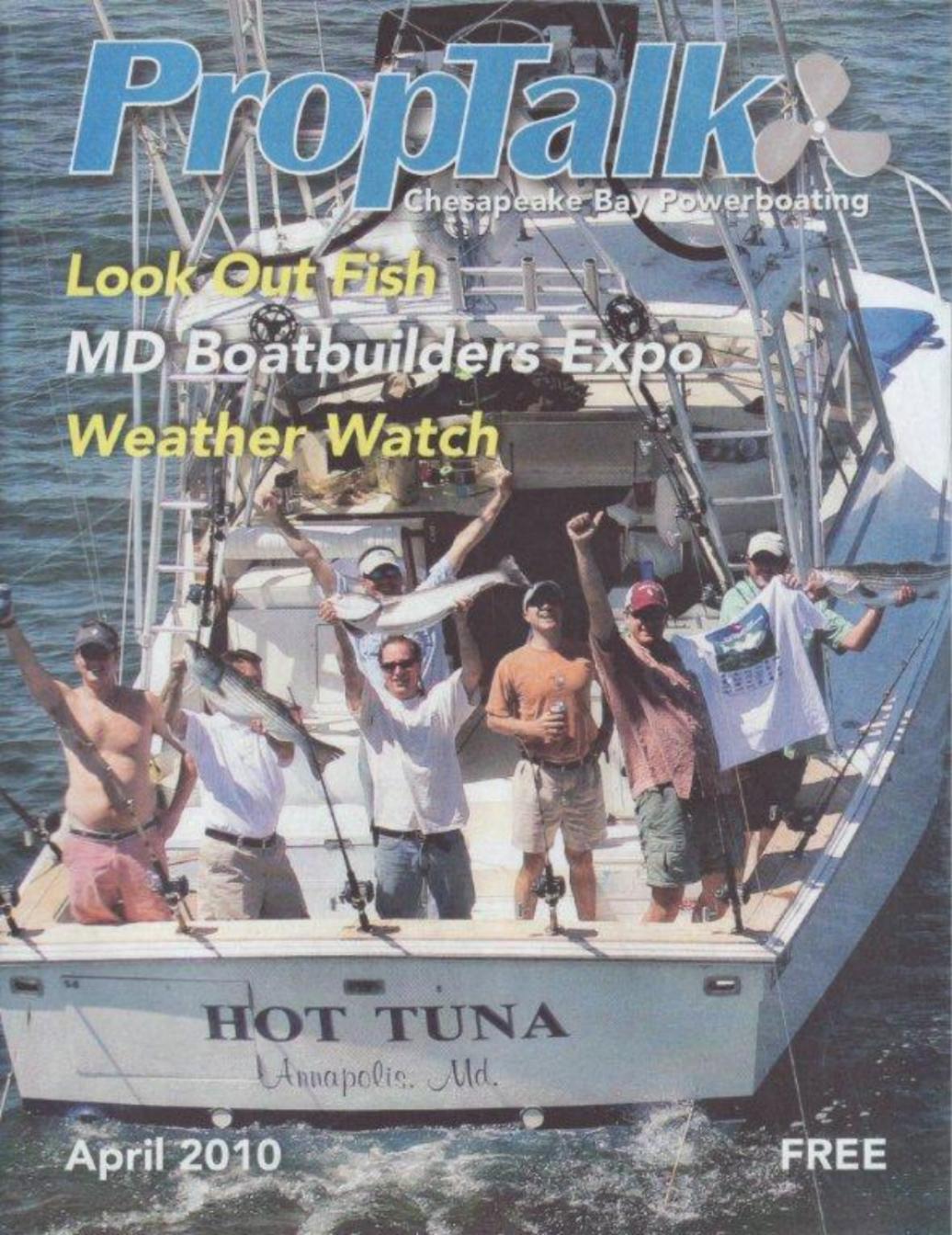


Chesapeake Bay Powerboating

Look Out Fish

MD Boatbuilders Expo

Weather Watch



HOT TUNA
Annapolis, Md.

April 2010

FREE

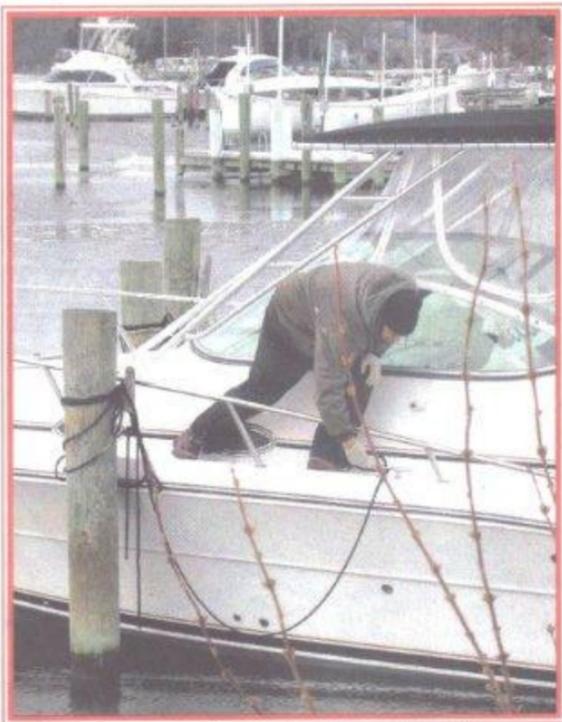
That Sinking Feeling

On February 24, after multiple blankets of snow had mostly melted away, my brother-in-law's 31-foot Stamas nearly sank in its slip on Cadle Creek. When our next-door neighbors noticed that the boat looked low in the water, they immediately called my husband to say as much. Jim then called my brother-in-law, who quickly got on the horn with Casa Rio Marina nearby, BoatU.S., and others.

Luckily, Charles (Chuck) Holm III works at the marina and was available to respond, saying, "When news of a boat sinking comes in, it's the 911 call of our business. Over the course of a year, we'll respond to a half a dozen of these." Chuck is certified to work on outboards and marine generators and has worked at the marina for two years now. And, he used to be a marine diver.

"I dropped everything I was doing, loaded up the truck with a generator and pump, and grabbed all the tools I could think of that I would need. When I got to the dock, the boat's twin 225 outboards were almost completely submerged, and the boat was iced into its slip. I assessed the situation and brought some equipment down to the dock. I first quickly chipped away at the ice and moved the boat near the dock. I then ripped up a plastic grocery bag into bits and pieces and jammed them into all the thorough-hulls I could reach to stop water from continuing to enter the boat. Luckily, the dock had electricity. I stayed on the dock and put a 110-volt water pump in the boat. It kicked into action, and the boat started to lift back up. Meanwhile, the neighbor came by and offered help if needed as did our general manager, Richard Maldeis."

"When she was high enough out of the water that my body weight wasn't a problem, I boarded the boat, found a 2.5-gallon bucket onboard, and hand bailed to speed things up. She came up nicely; it was one of the easiest rises I've done. I made sure her batteries and bilge pumps worked and returned to the marina."



Going above and beyond... Chuck Holm says, "It's my job."

"The good news is the engines never were completely submerged, and no water got inside the cabin. She didn't go all the way down to the bottom. If we had left her alone for two more hours, it would have been a different story. We would probably have had to call in a diver. Sometimes, though, when a boat sinks, you can use the four surrounding pilings to jack her up with air-filled lift bags and a diver.

The goal is to get the boat up high enough so the pumps can catch up with the water coming in. Each situation is different, though."

"I returned to the boat the next day, double-checked to make sure she was OK, and got both outboards to start. With 50-knot winds expected the next day and the creek cleared somewhat of ice, we decided to have the owner arrange a tow to Rhode River Marina for a full checkup. My marina was still iced in. I untied and stayed on the boat while TowBoatU.S. out of Annapolis towed her to the marina; I wanted to make sure everything was secured. Richard met us at Rhode River Marina, picked me up, and got me back to my truck. Before I left the boat, she had been backed up to the bulkhead and had already been picked up by that facility's big forklift. Safe and sound."

When we last spoke, Chuck reminded me that while winterizing my own boat, he had noticed that the port engine didn't take in the antifreeze well. He just wanted to make sure we got that checked out before the spring splash at Casa Rio Marina.

This just goes to show you how important it is to develop a solid relationship with a marina and its staff. We've used the services of Casa Rio Marina for about 20 years now; we don't nickle and time them, and they don't nickle and dime us. The marina has always taken good care of us and our boats.

We can't thank you enough, Chuck.

Ruth