

## **Expect the Best**

<http://www.oxfordyachtclub.com/article.html>

Keep the water on the outside

Don't hit anything hard

Expect the best, prepare for the worst

Ok, someone else said these things and more bits of sailor wisdom, (we are about sailing), but these three and quite a few others rattle about in my brain emerging when the appropriate times dictate, I may have said one or more to some of you, for that please excuse the redundancy, however for me, it's good to be thinking this stuff allot. It's basic common sense, maybe boating sense, but there has been times in my life that perhaps I didn't use the good sense I say I remember, and maybe I did drill a hole through my hull once and the water came gushing in during a routine maintenance project, or there might have been a time I touched a piling or bulkhead or two, ( I know, you saw that), and of course I do admit to saying to myself the weather will be fine for me and my hearty little sloop, only to limp back into port with a torn sail and broken reefing gear, a few times.

But at least I think I try, and considering all the bonehead stuff that happens around the sailing world, I'm still here many years later, with a few nicks as I have admitted. But then the worst can happen, and when it does, we should take some solace in knowing but for the grace of God goes me, or a friend or worse. Recently this past fall, Mike McDonough, 50 years old, a racer and sailing instructor at the Chesapeake Sailing School on the western shore took off on his Owens 39 in unseasonably mild weather for a singlehanded session from Back Creek. His sailboat Valkyrie was found with her sails up and no one aboard against the Bay Bridge, his body later was recovered near Kent Island presumably drowned.

'No amount of skill, no equipment, and no boat will keep you from disaster if you don't develop the most important seagoing skill of all, a complete fear of falling overboard.' L.Pardey

I have a friend, a Doctor from Arkansas that has a Pacific Seacraft 37 that he sails all over the hemisphere. I've sailed with him and he's very careful and deliberate about safety, adheres to all the little sayings, and more, keeps plenty of spares aboard, communication equipment, crew, and needless to say has a hearty vessel. So, then why was it a few years back he was approaching Bermuda sailing in the Carib 1500, when he started taking on water, allot, and quickly. He was sinking in this wonderful boat, but why? He caught a piece of sine netting in his prop, it pulled out the shaft enough to allow all that water in, and by the time they discovered the problem and

the extent of the failure it was too late, they abandoned ship and were rescued by a Navy SAR vessel. Ever catch a crab pot, hmmm.

I love sailing, it is life to me. Whether or not you're a motor boater or a sailor, or you've seen the Southern Cross or have crossed the equator, the green flash or the high latitudes, we each always have that promise, that opportunity to alter and improve our lives that occurs in the promise of "another day".