



BACK TO THE FUTURE

John Farewell | State Circuit Rider II

The channel that leads into the harbor was both narrow and dangerous. Veering off to either the left or right meant sure destruction as the fury of the sea would dash your vessel against the reefs sending you plummeting to the bottom of the sea. Such was the fate of many a mariner and pleasure boater alike. The year was 1963. A few of the locals in this quiet little harbor town



came together to do something about this channel of death. After a brief discussion, it was decided to construct a lighthouse to help guide vessels through this dangerous channel. Construction began immediately and within a few short months it was completed. Results of their hard work were seen at once as vessel after vessel safely made it into the harbor with the help of this guiding light. However, there were still the occasional times when the sea reared its ugly head and swallowed up an unsuspecting vessel. Again the locals banded together and decided to man the lighthouse with a rescue team who would watch over the channel. Two brothers were given the task armed with nothing more than a row boat and several life vests. Boaters began carrying flare guns in order to send out distress signals, if needed. Within the first few months the team had saved over a dozen people from the grip of death. Then came the day when a wealthy business man left the harbor to spend the day at sea along with his family. By late afternoon, as they were returning home, the sky began to turn black. Without warning he suddenly found himself at the mercy of the sea as the waves tossed his vessel towards the reefs. He fired his flare gun to signal for help. The two brothers were just sitting down to their evening meal when they spotted the call. Without hesitation they manned their row boat and headed out to sea. A second flare went up, then a third. They reached the sinking ship just in time to save the wealthy business man along with his wife

and son. The man was so grateful for what the two brothers had done that he decided to invest in the lighthouse. A large meeting room was added. State of the art rescue boats and equipment replaced the old rowboat. People came from all around to join this newly formed organization. A governing body was formed and empowered with the task of setting up by-laws and rules to help govern the organization. Before long the membership grew from a measly two, to over a hundred. As time went on, squabbles began to arise as to how things should be done in order to best serve the harbor. Budget issues, safety issues, political agendas as well as membership requirements soon became the focus of attention. In time, the old brothers retired and moved to the other side of the harbor, their ideas considered too old fashion to be of any value in this new fast paced world. They took with them nothing but the old row boat and life vests that had served them so well. It wasn't long before the people became so busy with the issues that they lost focus and forgot what their purpose was, to safe guard the harbor. On one faithful night a storm arose from the north as a vessel approached the old lighthouse. Nobody inside even noticed. But as fate would have it, the old brothers still stood by. They spotted the vessel as it was slammed against the reefs tearing a large hole in the hull of the ship. Immediately, they sprang into action and headed out to sea. Once again these two men saved the lives of yet another crew, unnoticed by those in the lighthouse. Little did the brothers know, the captain of this ship was the very son of the wealthy business man that they had saved from the grip of death so many years ago.

It has been said that the future depends on what we do today. What the wealthy business man had intended for good was the very thing that began a downhill trend that almost cost him the life of his son. Had it not been for the actions of a couple of faithful men, there would have been yet another tragedy at sea. I can't help but wonder if those before us knew what the consequences of their actions would have on us today. The effects of the industrial age which has polluted many of our water supplies is now the focus of attention. From the PFOA's found in the drinking water in Hoosick Falls, NY, to the lead and copper problems that now haunt Flint, MI, as well as the issue of unregulated contaminants and what to do about them. These issues, and many more, will be the >>>

center of attention for a long time to come. From aging infrastructure to aging operators, the problems that now face our industry are endless.



As I write this article, we are in the midst of the political race to decide who will be the next president of the United States. Each candidate making their promises to “Make America Great Again.” Greatness does not come from those who live in the “lighthouse”,

rather greatness comes from small things done well every day. As I travel around this great land of ours, I am continuously reminded of what makes the heart of this nation tick. It’s not the political and bureaucratically arenas that make us a great nation, as necessary as these are, rather what makes this a great nation is those of you who “live on the other side of the harbor.” Those who rise each and every morning and do the things you do, often times armed with nothing more than “a row boat and a few vests”. It’s those of you who have won the battle over your own will and who have a passion and a commitment to do the right thing, no matter what the cost, even as the waves of humanity crash in all around you. I count it a privilege to be part of an organization that is committed to helping you be the best that you can be. Together, let us watch over our harbors so that the future generations don’t have to deal with the mess that we now face. 💧💧

