



Great Lakes News and Views

A GLCC Member Review of *Happy Hooking, The Art of Anchoring*

By Allen (Murph) Murphy

Captains Alex and Daria Blackwell, the noted husband-and-wife cruising team have recently released their second expanded edition of their *Happy Hooking – The Art of Anchoring*. I was impressed with the quantity and quality of the information they provide, and the easy style in which they present their detailed advice.

The Blackwells are instructors with the *GLCCSchool*, and have presented an excellent webinar both seasons the *GLCCSchool* has been open, earning positive feedback. More details about their webinars can be found at www.GLCCSchool.com.

Even long-time cruisers, who anchor frequently, will find delightful data to enable them to improve their anchoring experiences. Novices should, and old salts may, put it on their shelf alongside Chapman's, Krestchmar, and Calder. If you have strong opinions about certain anchors, especially some old classics like the CQR, you may want to read this in your thicker hide. The Blackwells pull no punches in their descriptions of designs they've grown to dislike: "The plough was one of man's great inventions, until some eejit made an anchor out of it."

They have data to support their opinions, as they've searched the literature for anchor test results ranging from French and Dutch anchor assessments to several recent analyses published in the US. Given the rapid growth in the variety of anchor designs over the past couple decades, it is important to consider the test results, especially as they demonstrate the impact of bottom types, scope, and rode. Even though the tried-and-true of the older designs have proven effective over the years, some of the newer designs tested significantly better in a number of conditions. In addition, the

Blackwells share anecdotal feedback that supports their findings of better holding by anchors such as the Manson Supreme, Fortress and the Rocna.

However, some of the best value in this book may be the tremendous details about numerous other anchoring topics, including dinghy anchoring, snubbers, chafe protection, swivels and shackles, use of trip lines, and kelleets. They cover the whys, hows, and wheres of anchoring. They explain about selecting an anchorage, accounting for weather, how to lower and retrieve your anchor, setting of two anchors, and anchoring in rivers, currents, and tides.

Very important advice comes from their thoughts and experience set down in their "Hooking Rules!" The Blackwells write what many of us suspected or learned over time, often in the school of hard knocks. Like the "Cardinal Rule of Anchoring," where the first boat sets the precedents regarding scope and swing room. They note this rule is documented in US Admiralty Law.

Happy Hooking's suggestions for proper etiquette goes beyond that, and covers topics such as entering the anchorage, proximity to others, disturbing the peace, smells, lights, and dinghy use. Truly, life in the anchorage would be idyllic, if all cruisers lived by these simple, common sense guidelines.

Happy Hooking – The Art of Anchoring is available from Amazon.com. 

