

Doubt Expressed By Coast Guard on Tug Superstition

New Orleans—(U.P.)—The fate of the tug Bratt, operating out of New Orleans, has old sea-dogs talking about a jinx.

But the Coast Guard gives no official nod to such superstition, says it's just a case of "bad legislation."

Consider the troubled past of the Bratt.

In May, 1955, she hit a vessel on the Mississippi river and sank. The crew was saved.

She was raised. In March of this year, a crewman slipped over the side near Mobile, Ala., when a cable popped between the hapless Bratt and her barge.

Two days later her barge plowed into her beaten skirts and sent her to the bottom to which she was getting accustomed.

And 24 hours later, her co-owner drowned when his speed-boat capsized after he looked over his Bratt as she lay in the Intra-coastal Canal 30 miles south of New Orleans.

Raised again, her acting captain balked, saying:

"I may lose my job, but I'll never go out on the Bratt again. The first time I looked at that tug, I knew something was funny about it. She's jinxed."

But the Coast Guard wants nothing of jinxes. Officials believe there is a dangerous situation because of lack of licensing requirements and lack of training for diesel tugboat skippers and crews.

They cite a 30-day period of this year in which 13 tugs sank and 12 men drowned in the Mississippi. The law calls for licensed pilots on steam-powered tugs, but not for the diesels.

Lt. Cmdr. William F. Rea, U.S. Coast Guard headquarters in New Orleans said recently:

"You can put anybody you want up there to operate a diesel-powered tug. They are not subject to full Coast Guard inspection nor are their operators required to be certified by the Coast Guard."

Cmdr. John F. Kettler, officer in charge of marine inspection here, said that some companies, on their own decisions, require that their diesel officers and men be licensed. But some of the companies "don't do it," he added.

The Coast Guard calls it a big problem because of the terrific increase in the towing business.

Capt. James C. Wendland, in charge of marine inspection before he retired, commented:

"The Coast Guard would welcome legislation to put these diesel tugs on the same licensing level as the steam ones. It would contribute greatly to safety measures here."

During Antarctica's summer, microscopic forms of sea life coat the underside of bay and ocean ice in a dark-brown layer like peanut butter. This plankton layer soaks up the heat of sunlight filtering through from above, melting the ice faster from the bottom than on top, the National Geographic Society says.

Is That So?

Some of the best hunting stories I've heard have been around the evening campfire while the smoke of pipes mingled with the fragrance of burning logs, singing and spluttering as they burn-



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ed. Here are some you may wish to add to this fall's hunting trips:

A young sportsman went hunting with an oldtimer and he managed to kill more pheasants because he had a young dog while Pops had his old blue pointer. Several times, in fact, the young sportsman saw the man fire over a clump of bushes with no results whatever.

"Why do you shoot when there's nothing there?" demanded the young sportsman.

"Well, you see I've been hunting with this dog for 11 seasons now and his nose isn't as keen as it used to be, but I'd rather waste some shells than let him know it."

From Philadelphia, I got this one: Three friends, John, Tom and Joe, planned to go duck hunting and they were decided on everything to take except the beverage. John decided on coffee, Tom on tea, and Joe on whiskey.

The day came and the boys rowed out to their blinds in separate boats. They sat out about four hours without seeing one duck. Finally, they called out to each other and decided to leave in 45 minutes. Just as they started to leave, one lone duck came flying over. John and Tom picked up their guns and blasted away, but missed.

Then Joe, who by this time was "three sheets to the wind" grabbed his gun and fired away. He hit the duck squarely and it fell right next to the boat. John and Tom seeing Joe's spectacular shot, excitedly yelled across to him: "Great shooting, Joe!" Joe quickly came back with: "Heck, out of a flock like that I usually bag three or four!"

Easy Hunting
A northwest reader tells this one on himself: "We were out at 5 a. m. for pheasants and after a day of tramping the fields we put the dogs in their carrier and were discussing our poor day. We hadn't even seen a pheasant much less shot at one. Sitting in the car, ready to start home, we were amazed to see a beautiful pheasant flying our way. He hit the telephone wires, broke his neck and dropped right in front of our car."

A northern California neighbor contributes this one: An old-timer in our neighborhood and a partner jumped a large three-point buck. The partner shot it down with one quick shot, hitting it in the head,

and the animal dropped in a patch of heavy brush. The hunters decided to grab the animal out of the brush and down the hill to an open spot to clean it.

"We each grabbed an antler," relates the old-timer, and started down the hill with the buck. "We had just gone a little way when the deer seemed to grow lighter." Thinking his partner was doing more than his share of the pulling, the old-timer told him to take it easy.

The partner in turn, told the old-timer to do the same. Thinking that rather strange, because the buck was a large one, they both glanced back and darned if that buck wasn't up on his feet and walking down the hill between them.

In a Fine Pickle
"We sure were in one fine pickle," states the old-timer. "The buck apparently had been stunned and was far from dead. Getting madder by the minute, too. And we were afraid to let go and the son of a gun was running pretty good by now. As he gained momentum, we had more and more trouble staying on our feet and finally were hanging on for dear life. It didn't take long after that for the deer to shake us loose and go tearing off down the hill alone."

And what's more, the old-timer backed up his tale of the fast buck, by saying: "I can prove this too because I was running my trap line the following winter and picked up two antlers, both three points, that had been shed a short distance down the ridge where this took place. Times on both sides had fingerprints a quarter inch deep in 'em, where Chatfield and I had been hanging on."

"I kept 'em in my shed for quite a spell and I'd be glad to show 'em to you," the old-timer says, "but sad to say the squirrels got to 'em and chewed off the fingerprints so I threw 'em away."

And let's wind this up with one a Richmond, Ida., teacher-reader of this column sent in: "In a physiology lesson one of my sixth graders wrote: 'We should always talk about something pleasant at mealtimes. Don't tell about the dead cow or dog you saw along the road, not even about the live mouse in the sack of pancake flour this morning.'"

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By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger-Naturalist



Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic—This beautifully molded silver lamp, embedded with precious stones, gives perpetual light before the tomb of Christopher Columbus in the Cathedral of Santo Domingo in this city. The lamp, a gift of the city of Genoa, Italy, the great Discoverer's birthplace, is in the shape of a crescent moon and reminds one of the lamp used by Aladdin. Ten panels surround the lamp depicting other explorers, who with Columbus, brought European civilization to America. The white marble tomb itself visible behind the lamp at the main entrance to the oldest cathedral in America shelters the bronze casket which is opened to reveal Columbus' remains on October 12 each year in this lush semitropical tourist haven.

Bear Shot To Death In Eugene City Limits

Eugene—(U.P.)—A wild bear was shot and killed yesterday within half a dozen blocks of the business district of this University city of 45,000 persons.

These are the "bare facts" as related by Police Sgt. John Baptiste.

Herbert Bauch returned home from work about 1 a.m. and went to bed. His dog started barking at something in the park across the street.

Bauch got up and got his flashlight. It revealed a black bear standing on its hind legs with its paws on a tree.

Bauch went home and called police. He explained that he thought of shooting it but that it was near the city zoo on Skinner's Butte. He figured the bear might have come from the zoo.

Police checked with the zoo and all the bears were accounted for there.

So officers called out extra men. The neighborhood on the west side of Eugene and the bank area of the Willamette river were hunted. Finally the bear was spotted by a prowler car in the doorway of a garage.

After further pursuit, Sgt. Baptiste brought the bear down with two shots from a 30.06 rifle.

Officers theorized the bear made its way into Eugene down the banks of the Willamette river.

It was about 1½ to 2 years old and weighed 150 to 175 pounds.

Salem—(U.P.)—The State Forestry Department has reported only 325 man-caused fires on department land so far this season.



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