

There is a common saying amongst fishermen that if you want some cheap entertainment “take the family, some lawn chairs and a cooler down to your local boat launch and watch the show”.

Even one of my favorite fishing websites has a bulletin board forum with stories about the crazy stuff people see happen at a boat launch.

Being that this weekend marks the traditional start of the busiest season at boat launches; I thought I would relate a few boat launch stories of my own.

Last year I was at a local launch prepping my boat. Now for those who don't know it, the proper place to prep your boat and load in the gear is not on the ramp itself, but in an area somewhere out of the way of those who are ready to launch or retrieve their boat. It's a basic launch rule.

While I and another person behind me were prepping our boats, a guy and his wife drive into the lot right past us, pull into the area needed for backing up, and proceed to prep their boat which blocked us from launching. Obviously they didn't know or didn't care about the above rule.

It also became quickly apparent that this guy who barged into the front of the line did not follow another rule which is: “The boat launch is not the place to learn how to back up your rig”. He was all over the place trying to get that trailer going straight.

Admittedly, most of us have had issues backing up a trailer especially when were new at it. Heck, there are days where I have a brain misfire and it takes me a couple of attempts to get the trailer where I want it. However, this guy was the worst I have ever seen and getting madder by the minute. I mentioned he was with his wife, right? Guess who was taking the brunt of his anger? A small crowd was also gathering to watch the show.

Well after a lot of shouting at his wife and trailer, he had his truck sideways on the ramp with the driver side tire perched up on some large rocks. However, his trailer was deep enough in the water to launch his boat, which he did. In the meantime, the other side of the launch freed up and I was able to get my rig in the water.

The last thing I heard as I was backing my boat away was his wife asking him if he grabbed her tackle box out of the truck. His response was “Get it yourself!” You could just feel the love. I wish I had my video camera.

Of course there have been several times where I am glad that there was no audience to see some of my mistakes. Thankfully I have not done anything to cause myself or my rig any great harm.

On the other hand, I have seen some people who were obviously going to be shelling a few bucks out of their pocket for repairs.

I was launching my boat at Lake Delavan back in 2004 and it was apparent that the two guys on the other side of the dock were having issues. One guy was at the wheel of the truck, and the other was standing in the water up to his chest at the back of trailer.

The guy in the water was using a large bar prying on trailer. It was obvious that they had backed in too deep and dropped the trailer axle off the cement ramp pad. This can be a bad thing especially if the drop off at the end of the pad is deep.

After a lot of work, they did get the trailer back up on the pad and moving forward. However, the one trailer wheel was now almost perpendicular to where it should be. The axle was probably bent.

Well the guy who was working on the trailer in the water came walking out and he was only wearing white briefs and a grim face.

I can honestly say that starting off your fishing day seeing a middle-aged, overweight man come walking out of the water wearing only wet, white briefs is a bad omen. Yes, we struggled to catch fish that day. I suggest if you see the same thing, just put the boat back on the trailer and head home. You've probably had the most fun you're going to have and the fish probably won't be biting.

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