

Sunday, April 04, 2010

The Fleet 2 Lido Invitational in MdR got some unexpected excitement when I was almost arrested for using the shot gun to finish the boats in front of the club.

Here are all the details as well as I know them.

About 3:30 some of the Lidos started coming down the channel. I asked who was in charge of taking the finishes and got some shrugs so I figured I should do it. I asked if everyone thought it would be fun give the winning Lido and C15 a gun. Everyone seemed to think it a good idea.

I went down to the dock with the gun but the first few Lidos were not doing the "Fun" race to the dock. So no gun. Then Gigi came by and said they also had retired but I could give them a "gun" anyway so I did.

Tom says the cops started to show up in the parking lot only a minute later. His speculation is that they were already on the way when they heard the gun shot! Shortly after the gun shot I heard a helicopter circling over head but a little up the channel. Then I saw the police boat coming down the channel and wondered to myself who they were looking for. It did not occur to me that they were looking for me. But I did decide that with the police boat just up the channel I would not use the shotgun until they left. (my one really good idea that day)

I was still hailing boats to see if they were racing or had retired. All had retired so no need for a gun in any case. But get this, I did gesture with the gun to let them know if they wanted a finish. The shot gun was on safety and loaded with blanks.

At some point I heard the helicopter yell something which I could not make out. After ward I was told it was actually a cop car in the parking lot saying "You in the red shirt, hands up!".

Finally the police boat pulled up even with me and said "hands in the air". This was the first time I realized that I was the cause of the swat team rolling out. I told the officer on the boat that I was just finishing boats that were racing. He actually turned his rifle away from me by a few inches. That felt good. After a couple more exchanges he said turn around and walk toward the officers on the dock.

Officers on the dock? What officers on the dock? Well when I turned around I found the entire end of the dock filled with cops pointing guns at me. And the entire balcony filled with sailors watching the action. Someone told me to walk toward the cops with my hand behind my head. I did. When I was about 30 feet away they said stop there and turn around. I did. Then they said walk backward toward them. I did. Then, when I was maybe 15 feet way they said to knee down. I did. Then a cop put a hand cuff on my right wrist and pulled it down behind me. He was a little awkward about taking my left hand down to the cuffs but finally got them on. They told me to sand and walked to the Sherriff's car.

While I was in the back seat I heard them call home to ask if their was any ordinance against shooting a blank in LA County. I guess there is none because they later explained that I had not broken any law they could find except perhaps disturbing the peace.

About two hours later they finally let me go.

Tom Estlow stood close by the entire time, that was reassuring. I hope I will never have to return the favor.

A couple of other members tried to “explain things” to the cops but this seemed to be counter productive.

When I finally made it up to the club I got a huge cheer and offers of many free drinks.

Tom assures me that we have used the shot gun on the dock in prior years for this event and Campbell Cup without incident.

I am very aware that things could have gone much worse, I could easily have been killed and that is very unsettling. I did not sleep well last night. I suppose in the future we will just use the cannon from the balcony and let the harbor master that we might shoot off a gun.

Ann Ach was there and got the sorry and I am told she sent out an email that evening to the Cal folks to say, “no cannons in the marina”

I got a bunch of phone calls and messages saying “were are glad you are OK” That is very nice.

Someone put mug shot numbers under my picture in the club.

Anything else?

Bruce