

The executive's decision

Have you ever had one of those days fishing where nothing seems to go right? One time my wife Anna and I went out on the river and from the very beginning I should have known to turn around and go home.

It all began while driving to the landing. I was motoring along when a car sped up to catch me. He got along side of us and rolled his window down. I rolled mine down and he said one of my coolers had blown out of the boat a few blocks back. I waved thanks and pulled over to turn around.

We drove back several blocks and could not see a cooler anywhere on the street. Someone must have already picked it up. Continuing on to the landing, we launched the Titanic and proceeded out into the river. The motor seemed to be acting up a little. Every time I would give it full throttle it would bog down. I made an executive decision that we would continue on.

Idling up river with the big motor took a little while but we got to our favorite fishing spot with plenty of daylight left to fish. I deployed the electric trolling motor and we started fishing. We managed to catch a few fish at our first spot but things slowed down so I made another executive decision. Moving farther up river to another favorite spot seemed like the right thing to do.

The big motor started up after turning it over for a while but it still would only run at idle speed. Not to worry, I thought. Even at idle it would still get us back to the landing with no problem.

When we got to the next spot we started fishing, using the electric trolling motor again. I had drained the first battery at the other spot so I switched to my second battery. Fishing was adequate, catching a few nice ones now and then. When the second battery started getting weak I figured we should probably quit fishing and head for the landing. One more fine executive decision.

I tried starting the big motor, but all it would do is turn over. Remember, I had trouble starting it the last time we moved. Needless to say, I had worn the starting battery down to the point where it just didn't have enough juice left to start.

By now a lot of the other boats on the river had already left as darkness was setting in. Not alarmed, I figured we would just troll back using the electric motor. It was time to make an executive decision though. I could either take the long way back around the islands, or cut across the shallows and save a great deal of distance. This took us out of the channel however, thus eliminating any chance of another boat coming along to help us.

I made another executive decision. Since most of the other boats had left anyway we probably would have to depend on ourselves. We headed across the shallows.

Luckily, there was a slight wind behind us because the trolling motor battery died halfway home. I dug out the canoe paddle that I carry for pushing off shore and started rowing. The Titanic is a eighteen foot fiberglass deck boat that weighs about two pounds less than an elephant. Paddling it with a canoe paddle is like digging a ditch with a teaspoon.

Darkness had fallen for quite a while and we were still about half a mile from the landing and at least three hundred yards off of the main river channel. We were planning on spending the night on the river.

All of a sudden I heard the sound of a outboard motor in the distance. I looked back at the spot we had been fishing earlier and saw running lights moving across the water. It was a small boat, but it was a boat, with a motor that seemed to be working just fine.

They had to go around a few islands to stay in the river channel but after the islands they would be headed towards us. I had my wife grab my emergency light out of storage so I could signal them.

I saw them round the corner in the river and started flashing S.O.S with the light. They kept on moving down the river. I kept on flashing, hoping they would see the light. Their motor stopped, I kept signaling. It started up again and as they got about even with our position they stopped again and hollered to us, "do you need help?"

Those are four of the sweetest words I've ever heard. They made their way over too us and I threw them a rope to tow us with. It turned out they were a young couple, boyfriend/girlfriend I imagine, and they were just out enjoying a moonlight ride in their little, twelve foot boat with about a ten horse motor.

That little motor worked its little heart out pulling that boat of mine but it made it all the way back to the landing. I thanked them for the help and looked in my pockets to see if I had any money that I could give them. I had left all of my money at home. They said I didn't owe them anything and went on their merry way. What a nice couple of kids.

It just goes to show you that there is still hope for this world. It also goes to show you that when an executive makes a decision, it isn't always the right one.