

2026 Adventure Cruises -- “Kick Off” Event

Mystery Cruise

By Bob Newbert

USCG Master Captain, AP-IN

My Mystery Cruises follow a simple, but successful formula.

- ☑ Unannounced destination
- ☑ Place we have never been
- ☑ Off-the-beaten path anchorage
- ☑ Unnamed, uncharted creek
- ☑ Beautiful, unspoiled setting
- ☑ Narrow & shallow waterway
- ☑ Skill in rafting and pivot turns required
- ☑ “Wow! I never knew this was here” feeling
- ☑ “I can’t believe we got in there and back out” sigh of relief

With all due respect to Capt. Kirk, our Mystery Cruises boldly go where no man has gone before. And by checking all the boxes, we add to the mystery; and dare I say, sense of “adventure.”



I have no dearth of destinations. We've barely scratched the surface. Still, to kick off the 2026 Adventure Cruise Season, I wanted something extra for this year's Mystery Cruise. But what?

We usually raft our boats for lunch. Been there, done that.

How about brunch? No, too complicated.

What if we brought a grill? We could BBQ. Nah, even more complicated. Messy, too.

A restaurant would be nice but there goes the unnamed, uncharted creek. Unless...unless we brought the restaurant to us.

YES! That's it! We'll bring the restaurant to us by asking it to "boldly go where no restaurant has gone before."

"Ta Da" – The Burger Boat! It's perfect and it clearly meets our goal of anchoring in a remote creek for lunch with friends amid the beauty of a Lowcountry marsh.



Sounds like a plan.

“If the plan doesn’t work, change the plan but never the goal.”

The “mystery” of this plan was to keep you guessing as we ran far up an unnamed, uncharted creek (*“Where in the world is he taking us????”*); turn the corner; and surprise everyone with the Burger Boat. We would then raft to the Burger Boat’s port & starboard for a catered party in the middle of nowhere. What could possibly go wrong?

Everything!

The plan worked wonderfully...on paper at least.

- I scouted our anchorage last December.
- Charted water depth and danger areas on my recon mission.
- Logged the coordinates of our anchorage far up a nameless creek.
- Picked a day when the tide was right.
- Did speed & distance calculations to time our arrival at a precise moment in the tide cycle.
- Determined how long we could stay at anchor before we needed to bust the raft and get out of Dodge.
- Plotted a Raft Plan, on paper, with specific assignments for each boat based on size.
- Drove to Talahi Island to meet the Burger Boat captain; review our rendezvous coordinates; set his arrival time so he’s there waiting when we came around the final bend; and set requirements for him as the “Anchor Boat” in our raft.
- Decided who else in the raft line would set anchors.
- Planned the distribution of meals boat-to-boat.
- Created contingency plans for food & beverage not pre-ordered at registration.

Game Day

Alas, plans don’t always work out no matter how carefully you diagram them. To wit:

- The Burger Boat was an hour late. (I had to stall the fleet for 20-minutes so he could get anchored up to receive us at our rendezvous coordinates).
- But...the Burger Boat never made it to our rendezvous. He lost power and drifted into marsh grass where he remained immobile and helpless.
- There goes the raft up. There goes the party.

And there went the Plan as dead as the Burger Boat's motor.

"Change the plan, but never the goal."

We pivoted to a different plan, on a different creek, but the goal remained the same: Lunch with friends in a gorgeous, remote setting.

In spite of it all, we nailed it. For sure it was a goal needing PLAN B, but its outcome –enjoying time on the water with friends– was never in doubt.

Never a mystery.



***DEAD IN THE WATER, blown up against the shore, the Burger Boat opened for business.
No rafting port & starboard that's for sure!***



RICK FORD coming in hot to pick up his order.



***DEB PEPE (left) with Kevin Hunter and Cristina Giroux enjoying Plan B.
("Change the plan but never the goal")***



QUEING UP for the grounded Burger Boat.



RUSH HOUR at lunch time.

Photo Credits: Linda Bange and Mike Davis