

village view

by Andrea Leonard

We're braced. In another two weeks, we all know, the Cape will be invaded for the summer season will be in full swing.

Beaches will swarm with sun-worshippers; bays will be so full of boats you'll think you can walk across, leaping from deck to deck; golf courses will have foursomes lined up for hours, waiting to tee off; lines as long will wait to check out at the supermarkets and double the time it takes to shop. Ah, summer.

Should you begin to feel, along towards the end of July, the need to escape from the mobs on Cape Cod, you might enjoy becoming a tourist yourself and taking a holiday across the canal.

Such a break in the routine can be educational, and it can also help you understand how tourists on Cape Cod react to us and our narrow land. Should the idea have any appeal, however, your next question might well be "Where could we go and what could we do?"

There are the islands, of course. Both Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard offer vacationers a wide choice of entertainment along with the isolation that's unique to islands.

If you love to fish, the waters off Block Island Sound abound with swordfish, and a visit to Block Island might prove an exciting experience. The ferry from Galilee at Point

Judith takes only an hour and a quarter from dock to dock.

There's Cuttyhunk, that tiny island at the end of the Elizabeth Chain, famous for seafood and lobster in particular.

The Connecticut shore is well worth exploring, too. Particularly rewarding to boatlovers will be a jaunt to Connecticut between July 27th and 31st, for on Friday and Saturday of that week, the third annual Antique and Classic Boat Rendezvous will be held at Mystic Seaport.

The display of ships and boats at Mystic Seaport draws boating enthusiasts all during the year, but of special interest to those who love the sea is the Rendezvous.

About sixty of the East Coast's finest antique boats are expected to participate in the festivities at this famous outdoor museum this year.

All day on Friday the boats will be arriving and by evening will be on display at the docks. On Saturday morning, the crews will "dress ship" for dockside inspection, and later in the day, midafternoon, all boats will parade on the Mystic River from the Seaport, downriver as far as Noank, and then back to their berths.

Spectators may see the parade from the banks of the river, and those who visit Mystic Seaport may inspect the classic boats from the docks.

Prizes will be awarded to the best of fleet, best sail boat, best power boat, best work boat, oldest boat entered, and the boat coming from the furthest distance.

A special prize for the most historically costumed crew will also be presented Saturday evening at an Awards Dinner at the Seaport's Seamen's Inne Restaurant.

Boats will be judged on aesthetic and technical bases for their quality of preservation and maintenance of original design. The panel of judges will consist of boat builders, leaders of boat building companies, a marine photographer, and editors of maritime publications.

The Rendezvous has been planned with the assistance of the Port Elco Club, a group of boat owners whose vessels were built by the Pleasure Boat Division of the Electric Boat Company.

Among the most prominent pleasure boat builders of the 1920's and 30's, Elco made the first stock boats which are noted for their classic lines and quality joiner work. Many Elcos are expected to attend the event.

Owners of eligible boats are invited to apply to join the display. To be eligible, participating craft must be pre-1940 sailing or power yachts, fitted out with living accommodations.

Application forms are available from the Antique & Classic Boat Rendezvous Committee, Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Conn. 06355; the phone number is 203-536-2631, ext. 318, should you wish to call.

The Antique and Classic Boat Rendezvous is among the most popular annual events at Mystic Seaport where historic ships and small craft are exhibited throughout the year. A trip to Mystic without seeing the Charles W. Morgan would be a wasted opportunity.

Other attractions in the immediate vicinity are Gillette Castle, a fairy-tale-like structure perched high on a hill above the Connecticut River; you have to see it to believe it. Don't miss an evening at the Opera House, either, a few miles upriver at East Haddam.

Adjacent to the Seaport is a fine aquarium with all varieties of aquatic life exhibited.

Where to stay? If you're not skipping your own craft and need accommodations, there are several excellent motels in Mystic and more at Groton; advance reservations are recommended.

For a special treat, contact the Griswold Inn at Essex, a hostelry that's been in continuous operation since 1776 and still boasts the East Coast's most excellent dining rooms. It's situated in the heart of a picture-book New England village on the bank of the Connecticut River. There's no finer accommodation for miles around.

Too far to drive? Not at all. If you leave the Cape after breakfast, you can easily lunch in Mystic. Essex is but a short drive further west, a drive you'll enjoy whether you take the fast route on the turnpike or the scenic one, upriver and across, via the one-car ferry that chugs back and forth over the broad Connecticut.

Planning ahead will guarantee you'll reap all the pleasures and none of the pains of touring, so book your room well ahead of time, and before you set out have your car checked to be certain it's in good mechanical condition. Then take a mid-summer holiday of your own.

Being a tourist is really rather fun.