

# *MM Email Summer Blue Sheet*

*From Puget Sound — August 30, 2011*



Someone asked for photos of some "cabin action." Here is the famous "Say Yay" being prepared for a sail by Grandson, Andrew, with friends.



The table of "commensality." Look it up. We welcome whoever is in camp. Meals are on the main deck overlooking the water. A smaller "happy hour" deck is in the background. All summer meals are prepared in a sheltered outdoor kitchen. Camp guests bring food and bedding.



I relax in my rocker on the far deck if I can beat someone to it.

I'll try some other photos if I can figure how to move them from my "smart phone" to the computer.

## **"Are you a participant?"**

We went on one of our rare summer jaunts across the bridge to drive I-5 to Seattle. A memorial service for longtime friend and colleague, Bob Brock.

Entering the church I was greeted by a friendly suited man who asked, "Are you a participant?"

I almost laughed, since I was dressed in my summer formal open shirt sans tie or jacket. But his job was to sort the sheep from the goats and send us to the right seats. I've been officiant at such events for too many years and more often than not have been a "participant." On the other hand, I was there for some reason. I don't think anyone came to be a non-participant.

I think I've spent too many years quibbling about whether to interpret words literally or not. I knew what he meant. I didn't need to have him ask whether I was going to be an up front and center speaking participant or an off to the side observing participant. I came to participate by being present with family and friends of Bob Brock.

In later thinking I remembered two memorial services I came to attend as a "non-participating participant" and found myself actually expected to have an up-front role to play. Where was that friendly usher to let me know my proper place?

My years of observing all kinds of memorials and funerals have convinced me that presence is participation of the highest order. Some stay away from such events because they can't think of what to say. Families won't remember the words anyway. But they will remember presence. While more formal moments of such events have value it is often the informal gathering where people shake hands and hug, when presence is personalized.

As it turned out in this particular service we had to duck out at the one hour and thirty minute point. We missed some meaningful words I am sure. But I felt we had been present and participated while sitting among the "non-participants." We make a point of trying to show up for events where we are not expected and when I have no special part. I have chosen the part I like best. Presence.

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