

Plan Your Best Summer Adventure with the Argo App

through Naples's 5th Avenue shopping district, bright and busy with late-night crowds. We joined them as if we had never had a care in the world. Ah, it's fine to be a boater! ↴

CBM Cruising Editor Jody Argo Schroath, with the help and not infrequent hindrance of ship's dogs Bindi and Sammy, goes up and down bays, rivers and creeks in search of adventure and stories.

ARGO: AN APP TO CALL OUR OWN

With the free Argo app (no relation), boaters can share their experiences, photos and recommendations with boating friends or non-boating friends who like to know what we're up to out on the water.

Argo comes complete with map, routing function, captain's log, and news feed. You can put in your destination and the app will find the shortest route based on your boat's draft. It will also determine how long it will take you to get there. Note: We haven't tried out this function, yet, but the route is based on NOAA charts. The app's map looks like Google or Apple maps, but with markers and some depths—handy but not meant to replace your chartplotter or navigation app such as Navionics.

Argo lets you keep track of your trips in the captain's log, which you can then share with friends through the news feed feature. While you are out on the water, you can drop pins to mark hazards, great fishing spots, good anchorages, favorite dock bars, and so forth. There is even a function that lets you chat with friends to arrange meet-ups. The app is available at the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Every year, Mike Weatherstein fields a flurry of questions as boaters prepare to launch their Memorial Day weekend adventures.

Do you know a good waterfront restaurant? Where is the next fuel dock? Where to get a good drink? What's the best route from Point A to Point B? Is there a cool island beach nearby? What's the closest hotel to the water?

Weatherstein has plenty of suggestions, but helping new boaters navigate the Chesapeake Bay was always a struggle. Until now. This year, Weatherstein is armed with a new tool that boaters can download to their phone called Argo, a free navigation and social app that connects the boating community by helping to plan trips, plot routes, find hot spots and scenic byways, and then share information with friends.

"I get asked all the time about where to go and how to get there," said Weatherstein, a marine master technician at All Star Marine in Essex, Md. "I tell them to follow such-and-such a creek and they say, woah, we're new to boating. We don't know where that creek is. How cool is it for them to punch it into an app and it takes them there?"

Think of it as having a first mate in your pocket.

Argo helps boaters discover new dock bars, restaurants, anchorages, fishing holes and historic bay side towns with descriptions and photos. Argo's news feeds and messaging functions allow friends to share experiences or plan their next raft-up.

Not sure how to get there? Argo will auto-route to a chosen destination based on the draft of your boat and provide hazard and map information with help from fellow boaters. During the trip, Argo can track your speed, show water depth and give an estimated time of arrival. Boaters can even save favorite voyages by logging the route, reports, photos and comments that can be shared with others.

"Punching coordinates into a chartplotter might take you on a straight path right across land," Weatherstein said. "Argo will give you an actual route and keep you away from hazardous water."



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