



ANGLER SAVED BY HIS LIFE JACKET

A reminder that accidents can happen, when least expected

Think boating accidents only happen in bad weather? Not so -- just ask Arthur Brantz, an experienced bass fisherman.

It was summer and Brantz was in a small jonboat fishing on the James River near Lynchburg, Virginia. "There was no indication of any danger," he says. "The conditions were perfect." Then suddenly, the prop on his motor hit a submerged rock. The boat spun around and flipped, tossing Brantz into the water. "The current and undertow dragged me to the bottom," he says. Luckily, Brantz had worn his life jacket from the start of his trip. "If I hadn't been wearing it, I would never have gotten to it."

Brantz's life jacket was one of the newer styles -- a lightweight, comfortable inflatable that resembles a fishing vest. "I had the presence of mind to find the rip cord and pull it. I bobbed to the surface." Now, Brantz says, "I won't go on a boat without wearing my life jacket."

Unfortunately, few anglers follow Brantz's lead. 91 percent of anglers who died in boating accidents in 2002 were not wearing life jackets. This means nearly all anglers who drowned would have survived -- if they had simply been wearing their life jackets.

If wearing a bulky orange thing while fishing is not your idea of a good time, don't worry. Thin, lightweight jackets that don't restrict movement are widely available today. Some are built right into fishing vests, like the one that saved Arthur Brantz. So why take the risk? Stories like Arthur Brantz's prove that accidents can happen even to experienced anglers on clear, calm days. So take charge of your safety. It's not enough to carry your life jacket -- Boat Smart. Boat Safe. Wear it!

Arthur Brantz is available for media interviews. Contact Kay Zimmer at PCI Communications. Phone: 703/823-1600. Email: kzimmer@pcicom.com

BOAT SMART. BOAT SAFE. WEAR IT!

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