The Thrill of the Mac

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For a bookish 13-year-old, it had been a good Christmas – books, clothes, and even a science fair kit. “Just one more present,” my dad said. “You know we’re going to spend this summer at the shore, so my last present is in the garage.

“A car?” I gasped, proving once again that teenage hormones will outpace common sense and rational thought every time. “No, silly! Just go look,” said my mom. When I reached the garage, I was amazed at what I saw: a small sailboat, bright orange, on a trailer. My dad’s face was beaming almost as brightly as the colors of the boat. “It’s a Sunfish”, he said, “and we’re going to learn to sail it this summer!”

Summer seems a long way away to a 13-year-old in December, but this little boat instantly propelled me in new directions. I read everything I could about sailing, and managed to fit something about it into almost every school project. Science? How a sail and rudder let you control a boat. Art? Sailboats. History? The boats the Vikings sailed in to North America.

At long last, summer came. The Sunfish was easy to sail, and I mastered it in a week. I was an only child, and my parents didn’t want me to sail alone, but I...
discovered that our neighbors at the shore had a daughter who knew the Barnegat Bay like the back of her hand. The summer was magical – she and I were all over the Bay, seeing how fast we could go on breezy days, exploring the sandbars when the winds were calmer.

When I was a little older, my dad got a bigger boat, and we learned to sail that together. My dad passed away when I was in college, and the boat was sold. I didn’t sail much after that, but after college graduation a friend and I took a bare-boat charter from Anacortes, Washington, and sailed in the San Juan Islands for a week.

Unfortunately, if college, marriage, and the early days of a career can be described as sailing toward a goal, then even the best day-to-day routine of work, family, chores, and responsibilities can become more like drifting. My life is well anchored now, with a good husband, a loving marriage, and a good job. But something about the first twitters of spring this year, and the brighter sparkle on the river as I walk across the bridge to work each morning, has stirred a familiar feeling inside me. I smile to myself as my doodles reveal it – I must go sailing again!

So my boss, the students I tutor in the community, my friends – everyone will have to do without me occasionally this spring, because I’m going to find a boat or a club nearby, and get onto the water again! My skills may be a little rusty, but I know they’ll come back. I’ll definitely be ready by July, sailing on again, for the Thrill of the Mac!

To learn more about the Mac, click here to read “A Three-Hour Tour?” by Lands’ End editor Evan McGlinn.

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