

*The Southwest Chapter-Antique & Classic Boat Society serving Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.*

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A message from your Southwest Chapter President,

Greetings Southwest Chapter Members,

**The spring boating season for 2025 is now here. Sunnyland's Chapter show in Taveres Fl.** last month was great fun. I would encourage each of you to attend at least once.

The Lake Conroe rendezvous is this weekend and Keels & Wheels show is rapidly approaching. The Lake LBJ Show is scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup>. Both Lake Conroe and LBJ events also have pre-events that are wonderful opportunities to run the boats. We would love to see you attend them.

The ACBS International Show in Clayton, NY is on track for September 15-21. Registration for the International Show should open soon. Get your reservations **early and join us to celebrate ACBS's 50<sup>th</sup>** anniversary.

Have a great spring and summer of boating and be safe out there. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Lindy Robinson





# Lake Conroe Rendezvous April 11-13, 2025



Contact a board member or check your email for details.  
NOW!

## *Sunnyland Boat Festival March 2025*

**Annually, a few Southwest Chapter members pilgrimage to Florida's Sunnyland festival, with this year being no exception. Here's a few photos of this Spring's events, the earliest show in the country.**





Sunnyland 2025





*Sunnyland 2025*















*Sunnyland 2025*





*Sunnyland 2025*





**May 3&4!**

**See you  
there!**



# Southwest's Safety Corner

*A huge thank you to BoatUS for allowing us to use this article in the newsletter! Well written and timely, they have much for us to learn in both this article and their regular magazine. Please support them as they do us. The link to the article is*

<https://www.boatus.com/expert-advice/expert-advice-archive/2024/october/hauling-with-smaller-vehicles>

## Hauling With Smaller Vehicles Bruce W. Smith, BoatUS

### Choosing the “right” boat/trailer combo for a specific vehicle – or the best vehicle for an existing boat/trailer – is key to safe towing

There are 11.5 million recreational boats registered in the U.S. – more than half of which are less than 26 feet, according to data published by the market research firm Statista. What the data doesn't show is how many of those millions of boat owners give thought about the vehicle they use to tow their boats to and from the boat ramps.

Many of today's novice boaters assume if the vehicle has a hitch ball that matches up with the boat trailer tongue and maintain highway speeds, all's good. Such thinking is not necessarily true – at least when it comes to using smaller vehicles for towing boats.

Take crossovers and compact SUVs for example. They're dominating the highways because the highly popular gas, hybrid, and electric-powered vehicles are versatile, capable, comfortable, and fuel-efficient daily drivers. They have a lot of cargo space and, in general, are just all around better than a car or a truck for many people.

Crossovers and smaller SUVs can also be good tow vehicles for boats as long as the weight of boat/trailer package falls below the maximum towing capacity stated by the vehicle manufacturer and the vehicle is “properly equipped.”

### What does ‘properly equipped’ mean?

Every time trailer towing capacities are mentioned or listed by a vehicle manufacturer there's always a footnote related to the vehicle being “properly equipped.” Those two words mean the vehicle must be equipped with a receiver hitch plus other special features installed by the factory that improve that specific vehicle's overall performance and safety when pulling a trailer.

That's because vehicle manufacturers set tow ratings based on extensive lab and field testing according to the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) certification guideline J2807 related to towing, which includes the proper items needed to tow a trailer safely with the vehicle being tested. That means using the factory-installed towing package.



Smaller SUVs and crossover -vehicles are perfectly capable of towing some boats when equipped with the optional factory towing package. Photo: Ford

## Safety-Trailer Towing with Small Vehicles

A feature the factory towing package can include, in addition to the proper hitch and wiring harness to the trailer, is a special “Tow/Haul” mode that tells the computer system(s) to change the shift pattern of the transmission and maybe even the suspension and steering. Some towing packages add more cooling capacity and upgrade shocks, springs, and other modifications that are not included in the same vehicle that doesn’t have the towing option.

Jeeps are very popular among active outdoor enthusiasts. Most Wrangler four-doors are limited to towing a maximum of 3,500 pounds.

Photo: Jeep



### Towing capacity explained

The trailer towing capacity for that vehicle, which is listed in the owner’s manual, is predicated on several factors including vehicle type; two-, four-, front- or all-wheel drive; engine size; axle ratio; and transmission. When all that certification is done, a final number is determined and noted in both the owner’s manual and usually on the VIN tag on the driver’s-side door or door frame.

That makes choosing one model over another pretty simple when it comes to towing a boat, ATVs, or even a camp trailer – you choose the model equipped with a towing package and a towing capacity greater than the weight of whatever trailer you plan to tow.

**TIP** *Don’t push the limit: When it comes time to choose a tow vehicle for your boat, it’s prudent for the towing capacity to be 20% to 30% greater than the trailered weight of the boat/trailer combo. This offers a little leeway so you don’t exceed the vehicle’s GCWR (the combined weight of the vehicle, passengers, cargo, fuel, and weight of the trailer) that might come into play during an outing. — B.W.S.*

### Traction: A boost for towing

Also be aware that front-wheel-drive (FWD) models are not very well suited to towing boats because they can have a difficult time pulling a boat up a wet, slippery launch ramp. Those conditions are where all-wheel-drive (AWD) and four-wheel-drive (4WD) models shine.

FWD vehicles are also prone to having steering and handling issues when there’s a trailer on the hitch because the added weight on the rear takes weight off the front end. That’s why tow ratings for FWD vehicles are lower than 4WD and AWD models.

**Most all-electric and hybrid vehicles have a lighter tow capacity than their gas or diesel counterparts. Why? Because towing capacity is derived by subtracting the weight of the loaded vehicle from its GCWR. The battery bank increases the vehicle’s weight, thus reducing towing capacity.**



### Finding a vehicle's tow rating

The easy part for an owner of compact and mid-size SUVs and crossovers is there's no need to stress out trying to determine its towing capacity or GCWR: Those are usually clearly stated deep in the owner's manual, in the section discussing towing. As mentioned, the numbers should also be found on the Safety Compliance Certification Label (VIN) placard on the driver's doorjamb, or door edge where the latch is located. You can also find the tow capacities of every vehicle by going to the vehicle manufacturer's website and use the search words "trailer" or "tow capacity" to find the numbers.

So, if you already own a boat and know its trailer weight, it should be easy to match a new vehicle to the current boat/trailer package. Conversely, if you are in the market for a boat/trailer package to fit a current vehicle, search the boat manufacturer's "package specs," or talk with the boat dealer to get the weight of the boat/trailer combo that caught your eye.

Keep in mind that boat weights vary widely, depending on configuration, size, and type of engine powering it, whether the hull is aluminum or fiberglass, and the type of trailer it's on. If the weight of the boat/trailer package is less than the maximum of your vehicle's tow capacity, all is good.

### About tongue weight

Owner's manuals and hitches often mention or list tongue load or tongue weight. Under normal towing situations with campers or utility trailers, the ideal weight the trailer's tongue puts on the hitch ball is typically between 10% and 15% of the trailer's weight. Too much or too little tongue weight can pose handling problems. Because most boats are weighted toward the aft due to engine placement, boat trailer tongue weights are more likely to range between 5% to 7%.

What is more important with boat trailers is adjusting the hitch ball height so the proper towing setup has the trailer frame sitting parallel (level) with that of the tow vehicle. — B.W.S.

Photo:  
Bruce W.  
Smith



### Light towing crossovers

You might be pleasantly surprised to know you might not have to trade in your crossover SUV for a pickup or full-size SUV to enjoy getting out on the water. Several of today's popular crossovers and smaller SUVs have towing capacities of 2,000 pounds – when properly equipped. That means the Jeep Renegade, Compass, two-door Wrangler, and Cherokee 4xe; Mazda CX-5; Kia Sportage; Hyundai Santa Fe; Bronco Sport, Subaru Outback; and Ford Maverick and EcoBoost Escape can easily pull a pair of stand-up PWCs, a 16-foot aluminum deep-V fishing boat, or multiple kayaks, among other trailerables.

### Small SUVs with medium tow ratings

If you want to tow a boat or PWCs that are a little bigger and heavier, there are crossover SUVs rated to pull 3,500 pounds, including the popular Subaru with the 2.4L Turbo, Toyota RAV4 2.5L four-cylinder AWD, four-door Jeep Wrangler, Mazda 2.5L Turbo CX-50, Ford 2.0L EcoBoost Escape and Edge, Chevy's Turbo 2.0L Blazer, and the 2.5L Hyundai Santa Fe, to name a few.

These all have the engine power along with special electronic transmission modes and other features in the factory towing packages to easily haul pairs of the largest PWCs, a trailer rack of kayaks, some nice 18-foot fiberglass bowriders and tournament-style bass boats, or even 20-foot center-console bay boats.

### CAUTION: Installing an aftermarket hitch

Installing a hitch and trailer wiring harness to your tow vehicle after purchase does not increase its towing capacity. The towing capacity is set by the vehicle manufacturer at the time the vehicle is built — and today's factory trailering packages typically include engine and transmission tuning changes, special electronic suspension and steering programming, additional cooling, and other features designed to improve the vehicle's ability to tow a trailer at the maximum weight. Those components and features are not usually included in an aftermarket hitch install.

— B.W.S.



Electric vehicles, such as the Rivian, sacrifice a little in towing capacity for the battery packs that power them. Photo: Bruce W. Smith



When you have a boat/trailer nicely matched to your vehicle and your lifestyle, it's easy to enjoy the drive to and from the water. Photo: Dodge

## Vehicles with higher tow ratings

When maximum towing capacity exceeds 4,000 pounds, the size and types of boats and water-sports toys that can be towed opens immensely. Acura MDX, Honda Pilot and Passport, Chevy Traverse, Ford Explorer, GMC 3.6L Acadia, Rivian R2, Mazda CX-90, Subaru 3.6L Ascent, and Jeep Cherokee are just a few of the vehicles that have strong towing capacities when properly equipped.

All the above could easily tow a big pontoon boat, the largest of bass boats, ski boats, bow riders, a trailer with four jet skis, some of the smaller crossover wakeboard boats, and many fiberglass center-console packages ideal for inshore/near-shore applications.

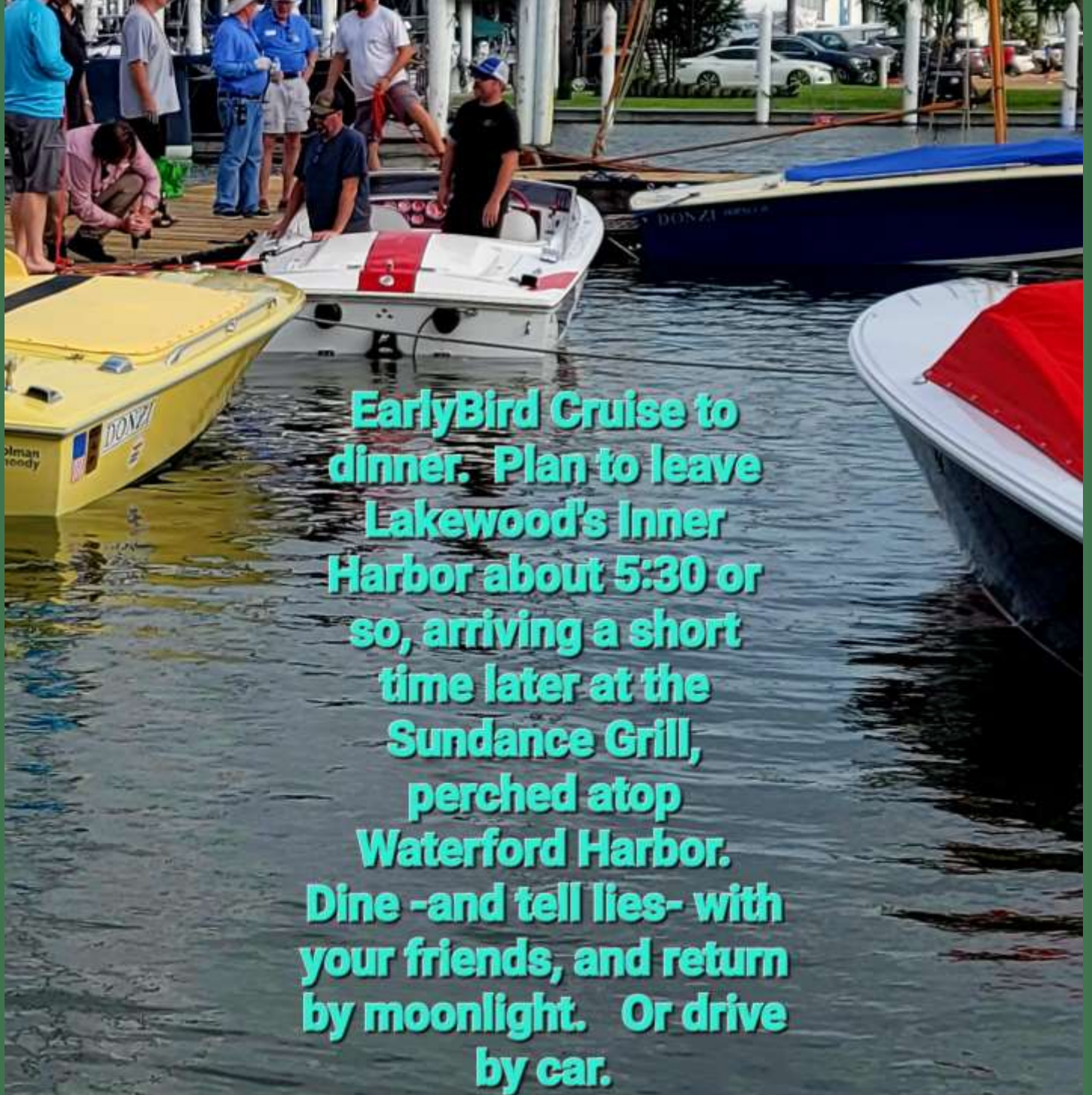
The bottom line? When you have a boat/trailer that's nicely matched to your vehicle and your lifestyle, the drive to/from the water is comfortable whatever style of recreational boating gets your adrenaline flowing. Towing more than what your vehicle is rated and your adrenaline could get pumping long before you see the boat ramp.

### About the author

Bruce Smith is a contributor to BoatUS Magazine.

He is the author of the book "The Complete Guide to Trailering Your Boat" and has been a respected automotive/boating -magazine writer for over 35 years.

# May 1st



**EarlyBird Cruise to dinner. Plan to leave Lakewood's Inner Harbor about 5:30 or so, arriving a short time later at the Sundance Grill, perched atop Waterford Harbor. Dine -and tell lies- with your friends, and return by moonlight. Or drive by car.**

# Upcoming Events

\*April 11-13, 2025

Lake Conroe Rendezvous

Conroe, Texas

\*May 1-4, 2025

Keels & Wheels Concours

Seabrook, Texas

\*August 2025 tbt

Heartland Classics 2025 Beaver Lake

Rodgers, AR

\*September 15,-21 2025

ACBS Annual Meeting/International Show celebrating 50 years!

Clayton, NY

\*September 2025 tbt

Heartland Classics Mahogany&Chrome

Grand Lake, Ok

\*October 10-12, 2025,

Lake LBJ Hillcountry Ride n Show

Horseshoe Bay, Texas

\*October 2025 tbt

**WBA Cruisin' Lake Lewisville**

Lewisville, Texas

\*October 18-19, 2025

Wooden Boat Festival

Madisonville, LA

As always, please confirm with a board member. These are tentative dates, especially those furthest away.

## The Board:

President	Lindy Robinson
Vice President	Brian Fielder
Treasurer	Robert Macaluso
Secretary	Robert Black
NewsLetter Ed	Craig Stanfield

## Directors:

Ray Balsam  
Trey Bull  
David Kanally  
Steve McCune  
Dave Person  
Clay Thompson

## Data:

Members  
Current 80  
fb members 1000+  
ig followers 206

For individual contact information, go to

[Southwest-acbs.org](http://Southwest-acbs.org)

For detailed information and vision of the Antique and Classic

Boat Society, go to [ACBS.org](http://ACBS.org).

We're also on Facebook as

ACBS Southwest Chapter - Vintage Boating

## Musings from the editor...

Roses are red,  
violets blue  
**Spring's here**  
No more to fear

Events are starting  
Events are happening  
Time to ready the steed  
And have a boat show lead

Boat US  
Came thru once again  
**Showing there's more to towing**  
Than an F250 truck thing

But its time to whine  
And moan  
Gimme an article  
**So I won't groan.**

Craig

