

Pass It On®...

Rescuing a Vessel — and a Family's Memories.

A boat at the bottom of the lake for 30 years and a renewed appreciation for life when it is restored.

Brian and Bobby Ogan were boating with their two toddlers and a niece on Lake Powell 30 years ago when a sudden storm exploded from the canyons. High winds drove the waves to oceanic heights.

In a storm that relentless, everyone heads for cover in safe harbors. Panicked boaters flew by as Brian struggled to get the stalled engine started again, waves pouring over the side of the boat.

"Nobody would stop and help us," Brian remembers. Perhaps they thought the boat was close enough to the marina, or they were too concerned about their own safety to notice anyone else. A large tour boat was idling through the waves, and the Ogans' small boat was washed into its path. While the tour boat crew was calling for the salvage boat, Brian knew this was his only chance to save the kids. He strapped all the life jackets onto the kids and his wife, and when the boats collided, Brian threw the toddlers aboard.

His own boat was sinking fast, and waves were tossing the boat about, but Brian managed to get the rest of his family onto the tour boat while one of the deckhands tried to help — until he got tangled in the rope. It was a dramatic moment: Brian's boat was going down, his family had made it to the tour boat under extreme circumstances, and now a deckhand was about to be dragged under. Brian and other crewmembers freed the deckhand just as the back end of the Ogans' boat plunged into the water. As the front deck catapulted upward, Brian rode the momentum onto the tour boat — and turned around just in time to see his own boat sink.

What started as a family reunion in the sun for the Ogans turned into a nightmare. Yet the entire family made it to shore safely, putting the loss of their boat in perspective.

Though Brian will tell you he did what any father would have done, his quick thinking and selfless actions saved lives that day. The memory stayed with him for years, a good story, a miraculous story. But he never imagined it having another chapter.

Thirty years later, Lake Powell was experiencing the effects of a megadrought. Water levels dropped so low that the yellow hull of Brian's boat rested in a dry marsh. That's where local resident Paul Cox found it. A self-taught mechanic, Paul is often called upon to rescue four-wheelers in remote areas and fix vehicles some deem fit only for the junkyard. When he saw the boat, he appreciated the challenge of not only retrieving it but making it run again.

A boat submerged for 30 years is an unlikely candidate for being seaworthy again. Paul hauled it out with his oversized tow truck and went to work. He replaced the engine, patched a crack in the hull and power-washed every inch inside and out. Then he called the Ogans, who flew out from Georgia for a teary reunion with a boat they thought was lost forever.

Closure can take many forms. Cruising across smooth water in a boat thought long lost brought back a sense of control over emotions that had haunted them for 30 years.

Rescue Someone... [PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

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