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"Months ago" is all that will come to mind for the date one of my grandsons became a licensed ship captain. How many months might be on record at the ranch, but on the road from Round Top on down to spend a couple of weeks at Port Aransas, "six, maybe seven ago" blends into the dim recollections afloat in the darkness of the old topper.

Direct blame belongs to the company kept at Tuesday lunches in Angelo. To wedge in a grandson or granddaughter story at that table of eight graybeards takes a parliamentarian filibusterer way above the PTA level onto city councils and beyond. You begin to wonder if you will ever be allowed to report that you are a grandfather, much less tell of the grandchildren's accomplishments.

I nod and comment at the right places in their stories. Refrain from dead-enders like "Little Joe's expertise in logarithms shore is going to help him in his career teaching English in Germany," or avoid sinkers like "Sometimes young mothers turn out the best."

So on the rest of the trip down to Port Aransas, I fretted about the delay in mentioning my grandson. Only Noelke to ever be even a sailor was the Big Boss, and that was from an economic misfortune met by the Merchant Service during the other depression in the 1930s.

The topic tormented me in Port Aransas whether to write a formal report on my grandson's achievement or not. One handicap was that my pal stayed too busy either on bird walks or on writing assignments to give an opinion.

Another block struck in the form of a new biography on the writer Flannery O'Connor, for some four to six to eight-hour reads every day for a three-day stint to finish the book. After her life story took over, had Captain Cook and my grandson sailed by bracing in the winds on the same bridge, they'd have had to fire a 10-gun salute to pry my attention from Miss O'Connor long enough to glance through the picture window to the sea.

Oh my, has this gone too far without an introduction? In case so, O'Connor is a Georgia writer who wrote and published in the late 1950s to end in the decade of the 1960s in a style on the verge of lapsing from prose into poetry.

She's the pick of fine crops of Southern writers in any period. Ol' Flannery leaves sentences and phrases afloat in a natural rhythm. Once I think I datelined an article from her hometown in Milledgeville, Georgia. I'm sure I did. I remember because her mother in those days strung a log chain across the front porch to hang a crude sign to remind folks not to knock on her door.

Miss O'Connor's writing makes present-day scribes, poets, pundits, play writers, storytellers and pretenders to the craft in the peak of their forms look like they have a hockey stick between their fingers instead of a ballpoint. Completion of the biography whetted my appetite to reread her work, especially "Revelation," tied with "A Good Man is Hard to Find" as her two best short stories, in my taste.

Like I started out to say, however, grandson and granddaughter profiles surface free from competition away from a table full of grandfathers. Main focus was that "Ol' Cap" and his 21 year-old mate were going to sail a ship (yacht) from the Island of Mallorca across the Mediterranean Sea to Turkey.

To orient you, the 21 year-old mate is the identification of a young exotic lass he met in France on dry land perhaps, or on a ferry maybe leaving dry land. Mallorca being an Island off Spain that the captain likes as a dock for him and his mate. Mark Turkey as a mysterious country (port) he sails for, that confounds grandfathers why grandsons can't come back to the ranch and be cowboys, instead of sailing off on yachts with mates that stop maritime and land traffic at a glimpse from the sea or the curb.

The other focus hit on the granddaughter living in the Bronx. She had just returned from visiting her brother in Mallorca. She writes postcards. She continues to write them even after I advised her that how to become a writer was to write postcards. (I wish I had opened: "One way to learn to be ...)

After I told her how to become a writer, she must have majored in another field. She caught the eye of a big-time society New York City photographer renowned at spotting good-looking dames in a town that's bound to have plenty of material.

So this is going to make the fourth time I've tried to tell her story and the twelfth for ol' Cap. However, I won't be covering the voyage to Turkey, or life in New York City. Nothing ever learned on the prairies will prepare you for pirates on the high seas, or big-time photography in the Northeast.