

100 stranded on Julia Belle

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By SCOTT WILLIAMS
of the Journal Star

An out-of-town group of senior citizens and dozens of other people were stranded on the Illinois River for two hours Monday after the Julia Belle Swain broke down shortly after embarking on its last overnight trip of the year.

The steamboat was carrying about 100 passengers when it developed engine trouble and drifted to a halt near Mossville, about 90 minutes after leaving its dock in downtown Peoria.

The boat drifted toward the west shore and came to a standstill in thick silt about 50 yards off-shore, where it sat for two hours until help arrived.

But getting the Julia Belle Swain home was not easy, because a tugboat called to the scene was unable to penetrate the silt. A smaller boat had to pull the steamboat out of the silt to where the tugboat was waiting.

The tugboat then guided the Julia Belle back down the river and returned it to its dock at the foot of Main Street another two hours later, at about 3 p.m. There, owner Dennis Trone apologized to his passengers, gave them all refunds, and began surveying the damage to his 15-year-old vessel.

Later, however, he refused to discuss the mishap, except to say, "When I have a problem, I pay through the nose. And that's what I did today — I paid through the nose."

The passengers had paid \$140 each for a six-hour cruise north to the Starved Rock State Park, located between LaSalle and Ottawa. They were to spend Monday night in the park lodge and return to Peoria at 7 tonight.

The Julia Belle makes that trip every week from June until Labor Day.

Among the passengers on Monday's ill-fated trip were about 40 senior citizens from LaFayette, Ind., whose tour guide later took them to Starved Rock State Park by chartered bus.

Tour guide John H. Anderson later said none of the

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