

Cleaner Boating

By Vincent Pica

District Commodore, First District, Southern Region (D1SR)
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

Cleanliness is next to godliness is an expression that goes back to Biblical days, when there were fewer people and even fewer boats. If our generation wants to hand over the world's precious waterways to our children and grandkids — in the same (or better) condition — there are a few simple rules, rubrics, and guidelines to follow.

Long Island's waters have been straining against mankind's excesses and wastefulness for a long time. Then along came Hurricane Sandy, upping the ante as storm drains, creeks, rivers, and even low-lying landfalls spewed debris and all manners of pollution into our bays, sounds, and seas. We'll be cleaning up from this storm for a

long time to come, so additional action on everyone's part is needed to ensure that we keep making our waterways cleaner.

Do you subscribe to the adage "good to the last drop?" Are you one of those boaters who squeezes off a few more ounces at the fuel dock, just to see half





Boat monitors channel 78, and he'll pump you out for free if you're in the Town of Southampton waters. You can call 1-800-ASK-FISH and ask where there are pumpout stations in your area, or you can consult the Going Coastal Map (or app), www.goingcoastal.org, for Long Island and New York City pumpout stations. Though many marinas are now charging for pumpouts, it's a small price to pay keep disease-causing bacteria, protozoans, and viruses out of the water, which might contaminate shellfish and perhaps shut down beaches. And while you're at it, put a user-friendly head on your boat!

Poison is something to be avoided, yet if you really think about it, many boaters still *intentionally* paint the bottoms of boats with poison. Though the goal is to repel barnacles, algae, slime, and other stowaways that can clog our intake valves, foul running gear, and cause us to burn more fuel and create more exhaust in order to get up to speed, the shelves of local supply stores are stocked with paints that cause a lot of collateral damage to our waterways.

A 30-foot boat, painted with copper-oxide anti-fouling paint, leaches two pounds of copper into the waterways each summer. Now, picture the discharge coming from a marina with 100 vessels! The paint companies haven't been sitting on their hands; they've developed a number of low-toxicity and toxin-free antifouling paints. Do these cost more? They usually do, but it is a once-a-year cost that helps solve a problem, rather than creating a bigger problem.

A final note about reducing waste and restoring our waters: if you see something, grab something! In other words, if you come upon flotsam in the water, grab your boat hook, bring it aboard, and dispose of it as if you were the one who had dropped it over the side. Nature has always benefited from the accumulation of little beneficial deeds; even if some of our neighbors opt out, the rest of us strive for improvement. Why? Well, as Cicero said 20 centuries ago, "Virtue is its own reward." ⚓

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of it (or more) spill over the side? For goodness sakes, why? Even setting aside U.S. Coast Guard regulations and fines, think about what you're doing. You're burning a number of gallons of gas each hour you're underway, and you're trying to top up the last few ounces? What does that represent, perhaps 20 seconds of steaming? That is never worth the detrimental effects of adding petroleum products into our waterways.

To further protect against spillage, boaters should fill jerry cans on the hard, not on the boat. If someone throws even a small wake at you while you're filling the can in the boat, it's better than even-money that gasoline is going to end up in the water (even if it lands in the boat, your bilge pump will spew it out before you can spell "big trouble!"). As an added precaution, keep some absorbent pads aboard to soak up spills.

You know that saying, "garbage in, garbage out"? That applies to boats as well as computer programs. It's easy enough to keep garbage out of the water; if you brought it out with you, bring it back in with you! Don't throw excess *anything* over the side, even if it is labeled "bio-degradable."

A lot of mariners, half seriously and half in jest, justify off-loading human waste into our waters with a wisecrack, asking "Do you know what the fish are doing in these waters?" Old saws aside, it is illegal to empty untreated sewage anywhere in the Long Island Sound or New York's inland waters. The Southampton Pooper

