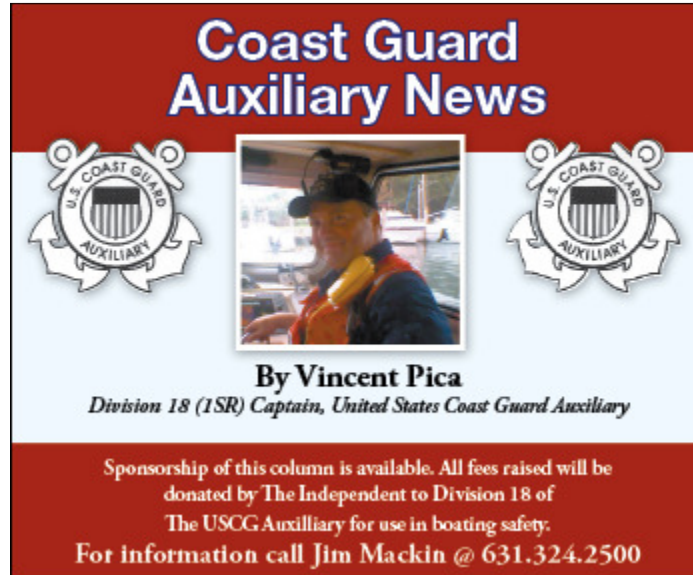


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**INDEPENDENT**

[Coast Guard Aux NEWS](#) ▶

December 08, 2010



The graphic features a red header with the text "Coast Guard Auxiliary News" in white. Below the header is a white section containing two circular emblems of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary on either side of a central photograph of a man in a blue jacket and cap on a boat. Below the photo, the text reads "By Vincent Pica" and "Division 18 (1SR) Captain, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary". A red footer contains the text: "Sponsorship of this column is available. All fees raised will be donated by The Independent to Division 18 of The USCG Auxiliary for use in boating safety. For information call Jim Mackin @ 631.324.2500".

## Ho-Ho-Ho! For the Boaters You Love, and It's No Laughing Matter

[By Vincent Pica](#)

Vincent Pica  
District Captain, Sector Long Island Sound/South, D1SR  
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

With Chanukah here and Christmas around the corner, it is time for all those who stand a watch and wait for the return of those that went to sea to think about being the "safety officer" before they go! And, skipper, how about the love you have for those that go to sea with you – kids, grandkids and mates – and creating the safest environment aboard that is feasible or possible?

From the Heart to the Head

There is no doubt that even the most grizzled seafarer can benefit from a boating safety class. Regulations do change over time and techniques get refined and advanced. The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Division-18 covers all of "Out East", from William Floyd out to the ends of both forks. Want to find out what, where and when the latest boating safety classes are – email me below and I'll look it up for you or go right to the web and find out - <http://www.div18cg.us/#CLASSES>.

From Stem to Stern

There is no greater "for free" service available than the free vessel safety check (see The Independent,

"No Fuss, No Muss – and Your Favorite Price (Free!) – Vessel Exams", 4/09/2008.) And, this is not a regulatory event like getting your car inspected. If the boat doesn't meet all the Federal standards, nothing bad happens (like not being able to drive your car since the inspection sticker was scrapped off.) Most likely, the USCGAux examiner will give you their cell phone number and ask you to call them when you've addressed the deficiency – most likely an expired flare package. And both exams are free! Want to schedule one? Email me below and I'll look it up for you or go right to the web and find out - <http://www.uscgboating.org/safety/vsc.htm>.

#### Nothing Lighter – or More Valuable

The statistics on life jackets are sobering for those that don't use them. For every 16 boaters that go into the water that don't have life jackets on, only 1 comes out (see The Independent, "Life Jackets Save Lives – Maybe Yours", 2/11/09.) Conversely, if they had a life jacket on, 15 come out. What population do you want your boater to be in? And, if they are the inflatable time, they hardly know that they have them on! And don't forget that the USCGAux is sponsoring a "Kids Don't Float" program. We leave life jackets at various cooperating marinas and you can borrow them for the day – on the honor system solely – for your favorite price – Free!

#### The Silent Killer – Carbon Monoxide

If your boat has any enclosed spaces, they need a Carbon Monoxide Detector (see The Independent, "Silent and Odorless – Carbon Monoxide – A Killer!" 4/25/2007) For \$29 at any major retailer like Home Depot, etc., you have the wake-up call that otherwise wouldn't come.

#### The Wireless "Kill Switch"

Every boat comes with a lanyard that is tied to the helmsman's belt or life jacket and also back to the ignition switch. If the helmsman falls overboard, the lanyard goes with him and the engine stops, along with the boat. This gives the boater the chance to climb back aboard. But no one uses the lanyard because the helmsman is lashed to the helm. They can't even walk a couple of feet across the deck to fetch a landing net for one of his fellow boaters. But now there are "wireless lanyards" on the market! The helmsman can walk all over the boat – just don't leave it! Now, that is a major safety uptick! Check on the internet or with any major chandlery.

Other great gift ideas to help keep boaters safe include:

- Emergency signaling kits -- flares, signal mirror, whistle, etc.
- Up-to-date navigational charts and/or a handheld GPS unit
- Navigation tools and calculators
- Hand-held VHF marine radio with extra batteries

Show your love – for the crew and the skipper.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at [JoinUSCGAux2010@aol.com](mailto:JoinUSCGAux2010@aol.com) or go

direct to John Blevins, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."