



The Clean Boating Act of 2008 – Who? Me??

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

Flotilla Commander, 18-06 (ISR) - United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



One of my shipmates, Flotilla 18-06's commander, Ed Wanamaker (my old job from 2006-2007), recently sent a letter to Senator Charles Schumer listing the details of why the bill before Congress (S 2766) is a bad idea for the private boater. And Senator Schumer said he'd listen. This column is about that.

A Permit for Driving a Motor Boat

As you may be aware, there has been a lot of discussion about a national registration of boaters, largely driven by security concerns. The *USS Cole* was almost sunk by what was essentially a dinghy loaded with dynamite and two terrorists in a hurry to meet their maker. What would it take to do even more damage? Would registration impede that? Recently, the U.S. Coast Guard came out and said that a national registration wouldn't achieve the goals outlined. Let each state, with their own particular concerns, set their own standards as high, or as low, as they wanted. Score '1' for the 10th Amendment.

But what about coming at it from the standpoint of cleaner water? Well, as they say, apple pie and motherhood are hard

to vote against. And, in case you haven't noticed, the 35 years that we have operated under the Clean Water Act has actually had an effect. Take note that harbor seals are back in Moriches Bay during the winter months and have been for a number of years now. Who isn't for clean water? Well, if changes contemplated in this 35-year law make it through Congress, recreational boaters will have to file for (read: pay for) special permits in order to discharge anything off their boat, including bilgewater, washdown water, grey water and even engine-cooling water that has done nothing but get sucked up from the bay, been heated in the exchange of engine heat with cold water, and sent back to the bay. Still in favor, bunky?

What Happened???

Nothing – except that commercial leviathans, which use bilge water for stabilization effects, have been bringing "exotic" species of fish, mollusks and plants into our waters. For example, if a commercial tanker takes on refined oil from Alaska and takes it to Malaysia, where it takes on products for manufacturers in the U.S., the

difference in weight will be compensated for by bringing on water into the bilge tanks so the vessel still sits "true" on her water line. When she gets to the U.S., she off loads her cargo and her ballasting water. If you think this can't be that big a deal, think again. Commercial mariners spend a LOT of time and technology keeping merchant vessels true to their specifications. The load line along the hull of one of these merchant ships would show letters on the load line marks. The letters have the following meanings:

- TF – Tropical Fresh Water
 - F – Fresh Water
 - T – Tropical Seawater
 - S – Summer Temperate Seawater
 - W – Winter Temperate Seawater
 - WNA – Winter North Atlantic
- Why? Because it matters. Fresh water is considered to have a density of 1000 kg/m³ and sea water 1025 kg/m³. Fresh water marks make allowance for the fact that the ship will float deeper in fresh water than salt water. But, for all these safety concerns, a lot of stowaways get sucked up with that water. This has created real

problems in many areas within the U.S. navigable waters. The zebra mussel is but one example. Native to fresh waters of Russia, it is now considered the most invasive species ever to "invade" the Great Lakes. An adult female zebra mussel is one of the most reproductive organisms in the world. It may produce between 30,000 and 40,000 eggs per year.

Two decades after zebra mussels were discovered in the Great Lakes, some scientists are calling the foreign mollusks the most harmful exotic species ever to invade the world's largest freshwater ecosystem. How'd they get here? Bilge water...

OK, We Should Stop That!

Agreed. So, environmentalists successfully fought against and had removed from the Clean Water Act an exemption for "normal operational discharge," which is exactly how these stowaways got here – through normal operational discharge. So there - take that!

Except that this same language exempted recreational boats – and the new language doesn't. You and your 20' Grady White will be treated the same as the ocean-going

leviathans.

To the Rescue – Maybe!

A new bill was introduced in the Senate in March that would, if passed, extend the exemption provided to recreational boaters. Titled "S2766," or the Clean Boating Act of 2008, if it doesn't pass by the September deadline, we'll all need permits to operate our boats. And, btw, if you are thinking about boating up to Connecticut to gamble, or to head for Block Island (that's in Rhode Island, bunky), or you are thinking of taking "The Ditch," aka the Intra-Coastal Waterway, to Florida, you just might need a permit for each state you pass or stop in.

So, if you believe as Abraham Lincoln did when he said, "government of the People by the People for the People shall not perish from the Earth," let your congressional representatives know what you think about "S2766" and why it should pass...

Senator Charles Schumer
202-224-6542

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton
202-224-4451

Congressman Timothy H. Bishop
202-225-3826

Joan's View

story and photos by Joan Travan

The Young Republicans Comedy Night

The Suffolk County Young Republicans recently held their annual comedy night at the Patchogue Elks on Oak Street in Patchogue.

The standing-room-only crowd laughed until their sides hurt as one comedian after another took the stage.

For information about membership, contact:

Chris Como
P.O. Box 382
Riverhead, NY 11901
451-2320

Comedy Night Fund-Raisers
Contact Rick Morgan & Friends
Booking Info:
654-0507, cell: 294-0440
morgan44@optonline.net
rickmorgancomedy@aol.com



Joe Latini, Bill Faulk, Addison Lemay, Chris Como (president), Nicole DeLuca, Kristen Gerkin, Michelle DiBrita, Leah Jefferson and Daniel Panico



Comedian Rick Morgan



Suffolk County Clerk Judy Pascale with daughter Amy Illardo



Comedienne Maria Walsh



Chris Como, Jesse Garcia, Bill Faulk, Michelle DiBrita, Julia Wilson, Henry Barton and Nicole DeLuca



Leroy Cool and comedian Kenny Warren