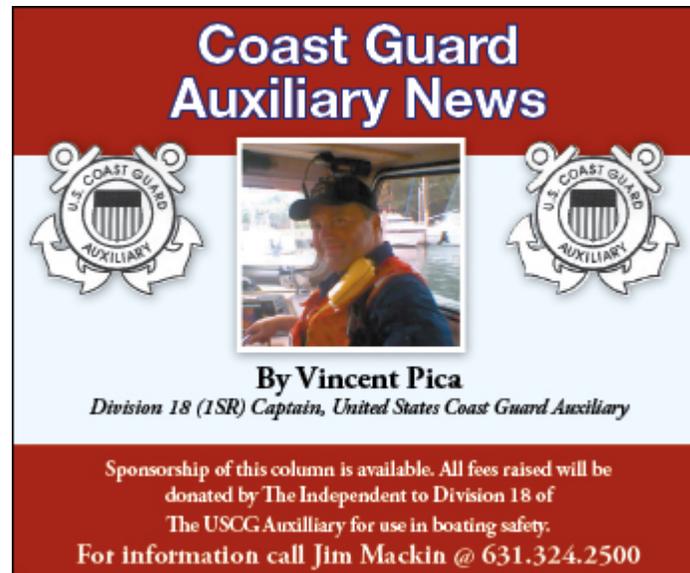


THE *East Hampton • Southampton • Riverhead • Southold • Shelter Island*
INDEPENDENT

Coast Guard Aux NEWS ▶

September 09, 2009



The graphic features a red header with the text "Coast Guard Auxiliary News" in white. Below the header is a white section containing two U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary logos on either side of a central photograph of a man in a blue uniform and cap. Below the photo, the text reads "By Vincent Pica" and "Division 18 (ISR) 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".

Winterizing Your Boat

Even with an Indian Summer to bathe us, it is but a reminder that many months of kindly weather are behind us and many months of dark, cold and dreary weather are ahead of us. Winterizing your boat falls into two types - you hand it off to your dock master and say, "see you in the Spring" or it is DIY time (Do It Yourself).

Clearly, there are some basic steps and one of them is to get the boat safely "onto the hard", as the old-timers call dry-dock. Storing your winterized boat in the water can only be done in a very controlled environment with, generally, professional and near-constant attention. Even with signs of global-heating all around us, (I think "global warming" sounds too benign), the creeks and coves of "Out East" freeze up for much of the winter. Even Moriches Bay itself has frozen across over the years and I am talking about recent years. The only two upsides to storing your winterized boat in the water is, one, that the temperate nature of the water might protect your boat from freezing damage if a cold snap hits us in the middle of an Indian Summer and you weren't ready for it. Secondly, you don't have to pay to haul the boat and return it to the water in the Spring. I still believe that that can be penny-wise and pound-foolish if this watery winter berth isn't a very controlled environment... There is a column coming about boat sinkings and 80% of them happen at the dock! So, let's focus this

column on spending the winter "on the hard"...

If you are going to hand the boat over to the dock master and say, "see you in the Spring", do so with a written check list, especially if you intend to do some of the work yourself. As you'll see, the advice below is not 100% extensive. I'd need most of the newspaper to give you a check list that could be used by every boat. (BTW, if you want a copy of the Boat-US/Seaworthy article on winterization, email me below and I will email a copy to you.) So, work with your dock master in signing off on what will be done by the yard and, if you desire to be involved, by you.

Other than covering the boat, the "mechanical system" is the most obvious place to start. Your mechanical system may only be your gasoline-powered 90-HP Johnson outboard. If so, you are going to flush the engine with fresh water (attached a garden hose to the intake and let it flush - engine OFF!), "fog" the engine with lubricating oil (be sure the fuel system is disconnected from the engine when you start the process), clean/replace the spark plugs and fuel filter, lube the carburetor and anything else that moves - choke, cam, starter linkage etc. Don't forget the lower unit (what the prop comes out of). Replace the lube oil. BTW, if you open the drain plug and water comes out first (oil floats), you need to replace the seal. Inspect the prop(s). Any dings? Get a professional to look at that. A bad "wheel" can shake your engine apart...

So that's your outboard. Did I ask if you had a diesel engine or an I/O? Does the boat have a transmission? In-board water system (sink/shower)? Air-conditioner? Don't forget that the fuel tanks need winterizing too... Electronics going to stay aboard or come home with the owner? So, as you can see, the list is extensive.

With that said, it can be very satisfying to lay up a boat for the winter. You saved yourself some amount of money and you have the satisfaction of knowing that your boat, from stem to stern, has enjoyed the owner's caring and knowing touch.