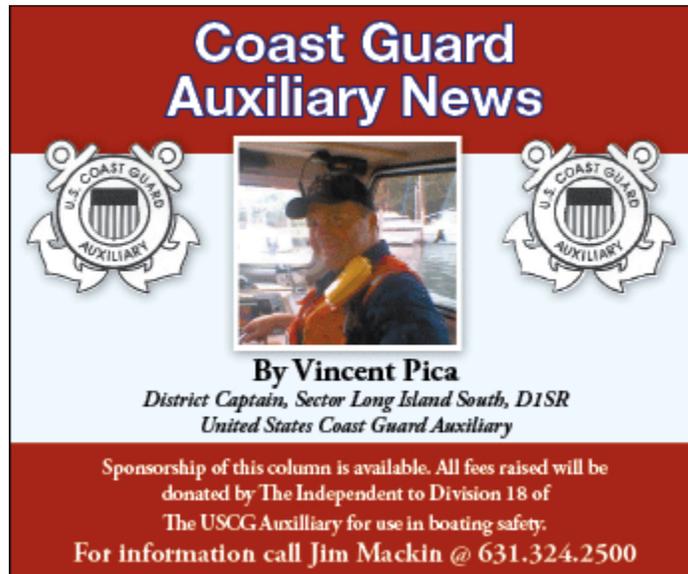


THE *East Hampton • Southampton • Riverhead • Southold • Shelter Island*
INDEPENDENT

[Coast Guard Aux NEWS](#) ▶

May 19, 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 U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary emblems 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" followed by "District Captain, Sector Long Island South, DISR" and "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".

Vessel Safety Check "Mega-Weeks" May 22 through July 11 – and Free! PART I

There is no greater "on the water" act of love for your fellow boaters, kids, spouses and friends than having a Vessel Safety Check conducted right in here. Oh, and it's your favorite price. Free. This column is about that.

Pedal to the Metal

The United States Coast Guard has declared to all its partners that, beginning with National Safe Boating Week, there is to be a concerted effort to get the word – and the deed – out there that all boaters and boats are entitled to, deserve and need a Vessel Safety Check (VSC). This event ends after the busy 4th of July weekend. During this seven week (eight weekends) time frame a focused and concentrated effort will be organized to perform VSCs at ramps, marinas, yacht clubs and other locations throughout our community.

Why Most Pass on the First Try and Why Some Need Two Tries

First, the VSC is NOT a regulatory event. If the boat doesn't meet USCG requirements for its size class, no one reports you to anybody. What is most likely to happen is one of two things:

Examiner: "Your flares are expired. Why don't you walk up to the boat house and buy yourself

some current ones. I'll wait." Boat Owner: "I'll be right back."

Examiner: "Here are the 3 things you need to address. Here's my cell phone #. Call me when you have them and I'll take a ride down to your marina." Boat Owner: "Thanks so much."

There are a lot of reasons why a boat might not pass muster but that is the point of the exam. You don't want to find out, after you scream, "honey, put on a life-jacket!" that they are no longer serviceable enough to save your loved one(s.) And, as implied above, the most likely reason that the boat won't pass muster is because your flares have expired. I just had my inspection yesterday and I did pass – but now I realize that my flares will expire in 6 weeks. Time for new ones – now. (see The Independent, "Visual Distress Signals & the Private Boat Captain", 8/18/09.)

Here is a quick review of when and how many flares (Visual Distress Signals) are needed.

When:

1) At all times, boats 16 feet or more in length must carry VDS suitable for day use AND VDS suitable for night use OR VDS suitable for both day and night use.

2) Between sunset and sunrise, boats less than 16 feet in length must carry VDS suitable for night use.

3) The following vessels are not required to carry VDS suitable for day use, but must carry VDS suitable for night use when operating between sunset and sunrise:

a. boats participating in organized events such as regattas, races or marine parades

b. manually propelled boats

c. sailboats of completely open construction, less than 26 feet in length and not equipped with propulsion machinery.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at 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 . . ."

Look for Part II in our next issue.