



## EPIRBs, PPIRBs and GPIRBs

■ by VINCENT T. PICA, II Flotilla Commander, 18-06 (ISR)  
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



**W**hen a boater is in trouble, a signal goes up from the boater's device to a satellite (in the old days it went up to planes that were, it was hoped, flying by) and down to the Coast Guard's Rescue Coordination Center. The device is called an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon or EPIRB [ee'purb].

Old models transmitted on dual frequencies of 121.5 and 243 mhz to be picked up by passing planes and satellites. It could take hours for someone or something to pass overhead. Also, the footprint that you were within could be as much as 12 square nautical miles. That is a lot of water to cover. These devices are "no longer recommended" by the Coast Guard.

### State of the Art

Interestingly, 121.5 mhz is

avored for radio direction finding (RDF). So the newest EPIRBs now transmit simultaneously on 406 mhz and 121.5 mhz, reducing the footprint to one square nautical mile. And the 406 mhz is heard by satellites all over the world; within an hour, the Coast Guard will have begun coming to your aid. And the rescuers will also be looking for your EPIRB's 121.5 mhz signal with their RDF gear. In heavy seas, that may very well be the difference between passing right by you while you are in the trough, or knowing that you are just over the next wave.

EPIRBs are classified by whether they will deploy automatically (Category I) or whether you have to "pull the pin" (Category II.) I have a CAT-I on my own vessel but I am hoping that I get the chance to grab it before it floats free and starts signaling for help. I want them to find me - not it! However, you can conjure up circumstances (knocked out in a capsize) where you are in no shape to

pull any pin and the EPIRB is at least drifting along with the boat, beeping and flashing away.

A "GPIRB" is an EPIRB with a GPS signaler built-in. It has all the functions of the EPIRB but also sends out your latitude and longitude. The search square is now roughly 30 ft. by 30 ft. and, unless you are trying to hide from the rescue team, they will find you. A "PPIRB" is a Personal EPIRB. You wear it on your person. It also has the built-in GPS. In the USCG Auxiliary, when you attain a coxswain rating (the person responsible for the boat, the crew and the mission), the USCG gives you a PPIRB. "Even if you go hiking, take this with you. If you get lost, we've got too much invested in you not to come get you!" the Coast Guard tells its auxiliary coxswains.

### What to Do?

Do you need one if you never leave the bays and creeks?

Frankly, no. How about if you go out to the Canyons for shark? Yes. You could be anywhere on a 100 nm rhumb line from Moriches Inlet to the Canyons. You are out of radio range and, unless you have a GPS aboard, you don't know your latitude/longitude within miles.

When you buy one (prices range from about \$200 to \$1500), you register all your details with NOAA, which maintains the global database. Keep that data up to date and one day you may find a red and white helicopter hovering over you.

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If you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at [USCGAUX2006@aol.com](mailto:USCGAUX2006@aol.com) or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members matters, at [F50-PS@emcg.us](mailto:F50-PS@emcg.us) and we will help you "get in this thing..."



## Heard from the Hill

by Councilwoman Carol Bissonette

**G**rinches seem to come and go and one of them was recently at the Mastic Pool. Sadly, I have to report that the Mastic Pool was vandalized and because of the theft, its reopening will be delayed yet again. It is infuriating that now, when we are in the last ten percent of work to be completed, someone who has so little regard for his or her fellow community members thought it a great idea to take something that didn't belong to him. Completion of the pool is something that we have been working tirelessly towards since taking office in January and to have yet another setback hurts every member of this community both in the loss of services and financially. Work that was already completed must be started over again and at additional expense. It is a sad statement that there are individuals who care so little

about our community and progress forward that for their own selfish gain they have stolen from this community once again.

Recently, I sponsored a Town Board Resolution to allocate funds from the Shirley Home Depot funds to be used for purchasing a new holiday tree, LED lighting, electrical work and for a menorah — all to be installed on the grass area adjacent to the Town of Brookhaven Nutrition Center on Neighborhood Road in Mastic Beach. The resolution was passed 7-0-0, as every member of the Town Board is supportive of our efforts to revitalize Neighborhood Road in Mastic Beach.

Selection of the tree was done by Richard Berkhout at the wonderful Bissett Nursery and they delivered the tree on Monday, November 27. Superintendent of Highways John Rouse, Parks Commissioner Brian Pratt, Commissioner Jim LaCarrubba,

Deputy Commissioner Bob Miller and David Barnes were instrumental in working as a team to help get all the work done in advance for the planting of the tree. Buddy Pulsonetti, the area foreman in the Mastic Beach area coordinated the effort to plant the new tree with his highway crew, ecology center personnel and parks department staff. Everyone involved in the project put forward a great team effort and everything will be ready for the Tree Lighting on Saturday, December 2, at 7 p.m. I would like to thank the Departments of Aviation and Transportation, Highway, Parks and Land Management for their outstanding efforts to get the job done in record time!

The electrical work done at the site will be used in the future for a public address system once the new gazebo is installed in the spring.

The next project for Neighborhood Road is to begin replacing street trees and lighting. We hope to be able to plant some of the new street trees this fall as long as the weather holds up.

With the passing of Supervisor Foley's 2007 Budget, funds have

been allocated in the 2007 Capital program for improvements to the Forge River Marina (\$105,000 for new floating docks, bulk heading and lighting) and for the Moriches Athletic Complex (\$500,000 for expansion). Additionally, \$138,000 has been earmarked for improvements at Great Gunn Beach. Neville Park in Center Moriches is very close to completion and will receive \$100,000 in capital improvements in 2007. This is the beginning of the revitalizing and upgrading of our many parks, beaches and public marinas here in Council District #6.

Congratulations to the William Floyd Colonials on their outstanding Division I title. The William Floyd School District continues to prove itself as one of the best all around schools with award winning music programs, scholars, artists and outstanding athletes. Each and every one of the students and faculty make us proud every day. Thank you and keep up the great teamwork!

Carol A. Bissonette,  
Councilmember, Council District #6