



The Great Recession - Boating on the Cheap!"

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

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



Haven't the last three years been fun? Jeesh, this has been one heck of a recession and I'm pretty sure that it isn't over, regardless of what they might be saying on TV or in Washington. As Ronald Reagan once defined it, it's a recession when your neighbor is out of work. It is a depression when you are out of work.

But, these times do provide opportunities (see SSP, "Some Days, Chicken; Some Days, Feathers", 6/18/08, and "Some Days, Chicken; Some Days, Feathers - an Update", 9/30/09.) But once you have one, how do you keep it from driving you into the poor house? This column is about that.

For Starters

First, never compromise safety for dollars. The sea, as I keep reminding you, is a hostile environment. It makes no sense to scrimp on safety gear or on the boat's inherent sea-keeping abilities. With that said, there is no sense being on a boat if you aren't having fun. So, before we start, safety and fun are the two unalterable goals of the exercise.

If you are contemplating buying a boat in this environment, be sure you buy just enough boat - and no more. There are some real bargains out there in marinas, boat show rooms and the internet - and many of them are there because the skipper bought more boat than he needed and, subsequently, could afford. If the bays and creeks are your goals, you don't need a 40' boat, no matter how cheap it is priced. Big boats are just inherently more expensive to maintain. From bottom paint, to dockage charges, to just having more "stuff" aboard, it all adds up. And the fuel costs are not 2x for a 40' boat versus a 20' boat, they are likely to be 4x (my guesstimate.) It just takes a lot more energy to move a larger boat through the water.



Cheaper vs. Longer?

On balance, longer wins. Cheap-grade vinyl "windows" for cockpit and flybridge enclosures will soon discolor and crack. I've used higher grade Strataglass, in the past and it lasted much longer, saving lots of money in the long run. I'm wary of "discount" motor oils. While you may still change the oil each season, which makes the brand oil seem more expensive, I wonder what is going on with the engine that the oil is protecting.

DIY - Do It Yourself

The more maintenance and repair work you can do well yourself, the more you'll save. But know your limits. Certain things should be left to trained professionals. Tackling these projects is asking for trouble and big expenditures. Examples might include work-

ing on electronics, refrigeration and repairs inside the engine - that that cheap oil may have precipitated...

Things that many can do or can learn to do include engine repair, (see SSP, "Before You Throw In The Towel, Give It a Go!", 2/18/09) and maintenance outside the engine - such as changing an impeller, raw water pump, thermostat and alternator - cleaning battery terminals (see SSP, "Before Throwing in the (electrical) Towel, Give it a Go", 7/28/10), changing a solenoid, replacing bilge pumps, inspecting connections and perhaps adjustments, and repair of deck and plumbing leaks.

Be a student of the game. Go to seminars at boat shows. Read boating magazines and invest in marine how-to books. The right tools are better than money in the bank. They may be expensive, but if you use them well, they can save you a fortune.

Avoid wearing out things unnecessarily fast. Use good chafing gear to avoid abrasion, which can ruin a line in one blow. Good chafing gear (old garden hose wears like iron) is very inexpensive and can save big bucks. The boat itself will wear out faster if you drive it hard (see SSP, "We're Sinking!", 12/13/06) and fast (see SSP, "Improving Your Fuel Efficiency on the Water", 7/23/08.) And you'll save a LOT of money if you throttle her back.

And don't forget your insurance (see SSP, "Boat Insurance - Friend or Foe", 12/9/09.) Do you have what you need and no more?

All food for thought...

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..."



by TONY SALERNO

FISHING WITH TONY

NY FISHING INDUSTRY MEETS FEDERAL OFFICIALS ON LONG ISLAND

The Long Island fishing community was granted its first opportunity to meet personally with the woman in charge of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Dr. Jane Lubchenco. About two dozen representatives of the New York fishing industry including representatives from the recreational fishing sector, were invited by Sen. Charles Schumer to participate in the meeting with Dr. Lubchenco at Oakland's Restaurant overlooking Shinnecock Inlet in Hampton Bays.

"It was an appropriate location, seeing as how the docks were loaded with boats which used to be out on the water fishing in previous summers," said Jim Hutchinson, Jr., Managing Director of the Recreational Fishing Alliance. "Then when you look out on the jetty which used to be lined with fluke fishermen this time of year and see only about five or six anglers, you know things are way off."

Sen. Schumer told the crowd gathered that the current summer flounder regulations in New York had "put the industry on death's door," and urged the NOAA Administrator to work to secure the best available science for the entire recreational industry. "Nobody wants to see over fishing, but they want to see the science done in a rational way," the Senator said in his opening remarks. He went on to support the Mid Atlantic Marine Fishery Council's (Council) Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Monitoring Committee (MC) newly recommended acceptable biological catch recommendations of between 32 and 34 million pounds of fluke which are being presented before the Council this week.

"We need more quota for 2011," Sen. Schumer told Dr. Lubchenco, who pledged to do what she could to support the Senator's request. The SSC and MC also issued recommendations for increasing the allowable catch of porgy in 2011 from anywhere between 15 percent to nearly 200 percent.

Schumer pledged to continue working with NOAA Fisheries to get help for the recreational sector, which includes looking at a new regional approach to fisheries management in the state. Schumer explained that one blanket season for the entire marine district was hurting business opportunities in New York by restricting access to healthy fisheries. "We'd like Dr. Lubchenco to ask the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the federal statistical folks to work with New York State to look at split seasons, particularly with regard to fluke," Schumer said. "It would be helpful if we could open the fluke season earlier in the spring for East End and North Fork anglers, while extending the season later into the fall for our South Shore, Brooklyn and Staten Island fleets to the west." Schumer said such an approach could be well replicated in other states where coastal catches vary region to region.



Suffolk County Legislator Jack Eddington

A New East Main Street Begins to Emerge

If you have taken a ride down East Main Street in Patchogue lately, you will have noticed that a few things have changed for the better. For instance, the two intersections at Conklin and Washington and Avery and Grove Avenues have been fully aligned. Before this alignment, you had to negotiate four traffic lights just to make it through those two intersections. Now, the traffic lights have been reduced, thus expediting the flow of traffic. Along with the traffic-flow benefits, the intersection realignment simply looks better and cleaner.

On this same stretch of East Main, I hope you have also had the chance to notice the newly planted trees and the attractive period lighting that has been installed with inlaid brick between the new sidewalks and curbs. The overall effect even now is amazing. With construction of the roadway completed, the aesthetic curb appeal of all these aesthetics will really shine through.

This past week Senator Foley announced that he had secured \$1 million in funding to upgrade the Patchogue Village Sewer Pump Station. This will allow for a full connection of any interested property owner along East Main Street.

The Town of Brookhaven is expected to sink dry sewer lines this September along East Main from Route 112 to Phyllis Drive. Once the lines are installed, the county will pave the last of the corridor roadway. This portion of the project will take to the end of the year to complete, but once completed should prove a lynchpin for business development and improvement on our hamlet's major thoroughfare.

Finally, it is all happening and yes there is more to be done. The Plaza Theater eminent domain proceeding must make its way through the court system, and it is a lengthy process. But once it is done, the community is freed from the burden of that blight to engage in the far more positive discussion of how to reinvent the site.

There is plenty to keep us busy until that happens. For instance, I am hoping that our community civics and clubs will be inspired by the new changes to work their beautification magic. I invite them to do so as every positive step we now take tips the scales further in favor of our East Main Street transformation.