



# Man Overboard!!!

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

U.S. Division Captain, Division 18 (1SR) - United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



Last week, a friend of mine fell overboard – while boarding a boat at the dock! Sound crazy? Not really – when the “victim” isn’t wearing proper shoes when he stepped on the gunwales and not into the boat and when the wake of a passing boat (who shouldn’t have been making a wake!) rocked the vessel strongly. In other words, things just go wrong at all the wrong time. Are you ready to deal with it?

As a case in point, I take young boaters out for seamanship exercises, I start the man-over-board drills with an example. I bring the boat up to 20 knots and ask one of the youngsters to throw a fender over board – and then count to 10 before yelling “Man Overboard!” During those 10 seconds, two things happen. The fender disappears behind the boat, well over a full football field behind, and the faces of the youngsters turn white and their jaws drop.

### Don’t Fall Overboard!

*Clearly, the best defense is not falling overboard. That means:*

1. No “bow riding,” i.e., sitting up on the bow with your feet dangling over the side (btw, violation of federal regulations – no limbs outside the boat while underway). Assuming the prop misses you as the boat whizzes over you, you could very likely be rendered unconscious by the boat passing over you. That is assuming the

propeller misses you.

2. No sitting on the gunwales – the edge of the boat – even if you are holding on tight. The skipper takes a wake too hard and you are airborne. If you land in the boat, it is a small miracle. If you were sitting on the transom, unless the boat is in reverse, physics demands that you end up in the water. That is if you are lucky enough that the boat is going fast enough for you to land behind the propeller. You could be unlucky enough to land on the prop instead of in the water. A variation of sitting on the gunwales is holding the taff rail (railing around the stern of the boat) and jumping up and down with the swells as the boat passes over them. This is swell fun until the boat gets sluiced to one side or the other by those same swells pushing the bow around. Instead of coming down inside the stern of the boat, which a moment ago was just below you, you come down in the water.

3. The failure to use the “3 point system” while working the boat can get even the most seasoned mariner. Always have 3 parts of your body in contact with the boat at all times, i.e., 2 hands, 1 foot; 2 feet, 1 hand. Try toppling over a 3-legged stool and you can see how much more stable this is than a 2-point system.

### You Have Fallen Overboard!

You need to do two things. First, attract as much attention as possible

as fast as you can. I never go on a boat without a knife, flash light and whistle on my person. The light and the whistle are to attract attention. The knife is to cut me away from the line I am tangled in that is dragging me below the water. Secondly, if the boat continues to steam way, start saving yourself – and that starts with conserving energy and heat. Eventually, someone will start to look for you. Don’t panic and waste life-sustaining energy. Assume the HELP position or at least float with your arms across your chest and your legs crossed (See *SSP*, “Surviving Hypothermia,” 2/14/07). If you slip below the water, don’t thrash and waste energy. Lie there for a few seconds and then dog paddle up. Get back in the prone position and start over. If the water isn’t too cold, you can do this for hours.

### Someone Has Fallen Off the Boat!

*Train your crew in the following:*

1. The first person who sees someone fall overboard does two things simultaneously. First, shouts at the top of his lungs “MAN OVERBOARD” and, second, NEVER takes his eyes off the person in the water and points at him constantly. I tell my crew, “Even if you have to watch him drown in front of you, never take your eyes off him.” Why? If you lose sight of him, we may never see him again. It is unbelievably difficult to find a head sticking up out of the water. This is

why the USCG often sends helicopters first to look for people in the water.

2. Someone else throws a cushion, fender, life-jacket – anything and everything – toward the victim to give them something to swim toward and hold onto.

3. The boat driver brings the boat to neutral. The skipper then determines what side the victim is on and turns the boat to the same side as the victim is on. It keeps the victim inside the turning radius of the boat – and keeps the propeller moving away from the person in the water.

4. Call the USCG and tell the watchstander you have a “man overboard!” Your crewmate may be injured, have swallowed a lungful of water or have a medical emergency (how about a heart attack?). Get the “rescue starts now” clock started ASAP!

5. Once you get alongside the victim, turn off the engine. Those props are potentially dangerous. Stop the engine entirely – especially if you are getting him back aboard via a swim platform.

Try the 10-second exercise one day with your crew. And watch their faces as the fender disappears astern.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at [JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com](mailto:JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com) or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members’ matters, at [FSO-PS@emcg.us](mailto:FSO-PS@emcg.us) and we will help you “get in this thing...”



## County Clerk Update

by JUDY PASCALE

### Suffolk County Clerk’s Office Wins NY State Archives and Records Administration Grant

Recently, Suffolk County Clerk Judith Pascale was notified that the Suffolk County Clerk’s Office was awarded a \$70,454 grant by the New York State Archives and Records Administration.

This grant was allocated from the New York State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund and will be used for the scanning and imaging of rapidly deteriorating deed transfer indexes from the last century.

“This grant will go a long way in preserving the land record history of Suffolk County. By digitally scanning these 1893-1950 grantor/grantee indexes, we create digital copies that will be utilized in place of the actual hard copies so that these original books will be retired from daily use. This process helps preserve our history while also providing for an efficient and effective safeguard of the

land title records of Suffolk County,” commented Pascale.

Last year the Suffolk County Clerk’s Office invested in a machine known as an Indus 5003 large format scanner. This investment will save taxpayers approximately \$50,000 a year, which represents the prior yearly average charge for recreation by private companies.

“Unlike paper archives, digital archives can be backed up. As we enter yet another hurricane season, we are again reminded that traditional paper mediums are increasingly susceptible to disaster. Accordingly, we utilize state-of-the-art computer storage systems to hold digital images of these paper mediums to provide an added layer of security in the protection of the public record,” concluded Pascale.

## Seventy-Six Trombones to Perform at Longwood High School

*New York Philharmonic’s Joseph Alessi to be Guest Clinician at Trombone Day*

Professor Harold Hill would have had nothing on Longwood High School on November 24th! More than 100 student trombonists from across Long Island will perform on the stage for Trombone Day and learn more about their instrument from Joseph Alessi, principal trombonist with the New York Philharmonic. He and other guest clinicians will work with students from several Long Island school districts that span between Long Beach and Greenport in a series of master classes and a 7:30 p.m. concert that is free and open to the public.

“We are proud to hold Long Island’s first ‘Trombone Day,’ said Dr. John J. Gallagher, Longwood’s Director of Fine Arts. “Joseph Alessi is a master musician, soloist and teacher. We are honored that he has chosen our Trombone Day to work with the students of Long Island.”

Joseph Alessi was appointed Principal Trombone of the New York Philharmonic in the spring of 1985, and was a soloist with the San Francisco Symphony before continuing his musical training at Philadelphia’s Curtis Institute of Music. Prior to joining the Philharmonic, Mr. Alessi was second trombone of The Philadelphia Orchestra for four seasons, and principal trombone of L’Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal for one season. In addition, he has performed as guest principal trombonist with the London

Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall led by Pierre Boulez.

Mr. Alessi has been a guest soloist with the Lincoln Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Virginia Symphony, Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Santa Barbara Symphony, South Dakota Symphony, New Japan Philharmonic, Seoul Philharmonic, Orchestra of Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania, Sicily, Mannheim National Theater Orchestra, National Symphony of Taiwan, Puerto Rico Symphony, Hague Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, and the Hartford Symphony.

In 2002 Mr. Alessi was awarded an International Trombone Association Award for his contributions to the world of trombone music and trombone playing. He is currently on the faculty of The Juilliard School. Further information about Mr. Alessi can be found on his website at [www.slidearea.com](http://www.slidearea.com).

Longwood’s music program boasts over 3,000 actively participating students. It has been named one of the “Best Communities in America” for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants. In 2008 and 2007, the High School Music Department was named a “Finalist” in the Grammy Signature Schools program, sponsored by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.