



of TARS & TERNS

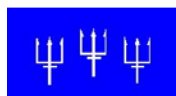


Volume XLVII Number 5

June 2013



Mark Your Calendar
NVSPS Meetings and Events



Commander Sends . . .
Cdr. Richard P. Davis, AP

JUNE 2013

12 - General Membership Meeting

1900 - 2100: BoatUS Headquarters; 880 South Pickett Street, Alexandria, VA

Guest Speaker: Mary Loose Deviney will speak on the new Virginia boating laws and regulations that came into effect 01 Jan 2013

26 - Executive Committee Meeting

1930—2100 at the George Mason University office; Fairfax, VA

28 - 30 - Operation Dry Water

A National Boating Under the Influence (BUI) Enforcement and Education Campaign

If you haven't already, it's time to launch your vessel. Yes it has been a little cool, but let's launch! However please be sure you have given it a thorough pre-launch check out. There are many checklists available as to what to check and the pass / fail criteria.

While on the subject, make sure you have made all preparations for bad weather, yes hurricanes etc. I always used to have my boat pulled and stored indoors. Contact your insurance company, some will offset the cost for the pulling vs. paying potential damage.

The annual Spring Picnic was held on 11 May at the FYC company and companionship was great, and the food was outstanding. If you were not able to attend – we missed you. While there we provided a VSC under the supervision of G. Nartsissov and members for the members of the FYC, 129 boat owners signed-up at my last count. Thanks to all our Vessel Examiners for an outstanding job.

Our membership is holding steady at 150, with several new potential applicants. We are proud to announce that our newest / youngest family member attended the Spring Picnic.

Continued on Page 3

Save the Date

NVSPS 2013 Wounded Warrior Cruise

1000 to 1730 - 14 September 2013

Patuxent Naval Air Station, West Basin Marina

Volunteers / Participants

All are welcome!

Contact: Francis Williamson – willyjhu@verizon.net

A detailed Squadron calendar including all meetings and educational courses can be found on our web site www.nvsp.org



Northern Virginia Sail and Power Squadron
A unit of the
United States Power Squadrons®

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Vacant

(Contact the Commander if you would like to help)



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Scheduled Meetings:

Unless otherwise noted, the General Membership Meetings will be held at the BoatUS* Headquarters facility at 1900. Any changes will be posted in this newsletter or on the Squadron web site.

BoatUS Headquarters and meeting location:

880 South Pickett Street, Alexandria VA.

From the Capital Beltway, take the VA-613/ Van Dorn Street exit, exit number 173, towards Franconia. Turn left onto South Van Dorn Street / VA-613 North. Turn left onto South Pickett Street. Go less than .5 miles and turn in at the BoatUS sign and go to the lighted parking lot in the rear. Proceed to the entrance.

State Fuel Tax Refunds

All recreational boaters can apply for a \$0.175 per-gallon refund of the state sales tax on highway gasoline, and a \$0.16 per-gallon refund on state tax on highway diesel fuel. To qualify, one must purchase at least 5 gallons of fuel per purchase. The refund is available to everyone who applies, not just VA residents.

Refund application forms can be found at any Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) office in Virginia or online at www.dmv.state.va.us/webdoc/forms/index.asp. For more information, call (804) 367-1831 or (800) 823-8357.

Looking for a free a Vessel Safety Check?
Or want to become an examiner yourself?
Contact P/C George Nartsissov, ganh@verizon.net



Of Tars & Terns

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Articles, opinions and advertisements do not necessarily reflect UPSP policy or endorsement unless so designated

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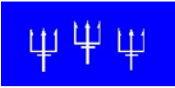
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Commander Sends . . .

Cdr. Richard P. Davis, AP

.... Continued from Page 1

At the last GM Meeting on 8 May, R. Schwartz, CEO BoatUS, was the guest speaker. His presentation was insightful and provided a good business model albeit different from USPS. Two key questions were presented to him for which he took action and which are answered separately in this newsletter.

Awards were presented to the following persons in the categories noted:

- Distinctive Communicator – Walt Lazear
- Vessel Safety Check (over 100) – George Nartsissov
- Distinctive Communicator – R. Davis and Frank Shults
- Social Media and Networking – Walt Lazear

Our congratulations and appreciation to the above for your contributions.

Looking forward. You can access the, D5 and USPS calendar of events on our website along with a lot of other important information such as courses and their dates. Note the next General Membership meeting is 12 June. Our next Squadron event is the international potluck Supper in October at FYC – which weekend would you prefer?



Richard P. Davis
NVSPS Commander

Join the Fun, Share the Knowledge !



Secretary

Lt/C Mary-Jane Hinkins, S

The Potomac River is the river we navigate on our boat. The river is 382 miles long. This is measured from the Fairfax Stone in West Virginia to the mouth of the Potomac at the Chesapeake bay. We navigate approximately 89 miles of this in Lord Stanley. The river is the fourth largest river on the Atlantic Coast and the 21st largest river in the United States. The District has been using the River as its main source of water since 1864. Today there are appropriately 486 gallons of drinking water taken from the river everyday by the DC area. This supplies around 5 million people in the watershed. Only 13 percent of the area uses well water as their source of drinking water.

The Potomac is 11.3 miles wide at the mouth and is measured from Point Lookout Maryland to Smith Point in Virginia. The Potomac has a drainage area of 14,670 square miles. This breaks down as follows 5723 square miles of this is from Virginia. 3,818 are from, Maryland, 3490 square miles from Pennsylvania, and 69 square miles from Washington D.C. There are about eight major cities in the Potomac basin: Washington, DC; Bethesda, Cumberland, Hagerstown, Frederick, Rockville, Waldorf, and St. Mary's City in Maryland; Chambersburg and Gettysburg in Pennsylvania; Alexandria, Arlington, Harrisonburg, and Front Royal in Virginia; and Harper's Ferry, Charles Town, and Martinsburg in West Virginia

The Potomac has twelve major tributaries which are the Anacostia River, Antietam Creek, the Cacapon River, Catoctin Creek, Conocoheague Creek, the Monocacy River, the North Branch, the South Branch, the Occoquan River, the Savage River, the Senaca Creek, and the Shenandoah River.

We mainly travel the portion of the river called the Tidal Potomac which begins less than 2 miles south of Washington D.C and it ends at the Chesapeake Bay. The rivers and creeks that make up the Tidal Potomac are as : Gulf Branch (Virginia), Donaldson Run (Virginia), Windy Run (Virginia), Spout Run (Virginia), Maddox Branch (District of Columbia), Foundry Branch (District of Columbia), Rock Creek (District of Columbia/Maryland), Tiber Creek (District of Columbia) (paved over), Rocky Run (Virginia) (paved over), Washington Channel (District of Columbia), Anacostia River (District of Columbia/Maryland; Buzzard Point), Stickfoot Branch (District of Columbia), Pope Branch (District of Columbia), Watts Branch (District of Columbia/

Continued on Page 5



Education Officer

Lt/C Sean P. Gallagher, JN

It's sure been a slow and chilly spring but expect that you have not let that foil your plans to get your boats de-winterized and back on the water. Its also been a little slow in the boater education business. We have three basic and six advanced courses scheduled between now and October as well as six half day seminars. Unfortunately we have also had to cancel a basic and an advanced course as well as three seminars due to lack of enrollment! This is where I need your help turning over some rocks to find those members and non-members that need a little push to re-engage in their boating education. As the Squadron is also absent of a Membership Chair and Public Relations Officer, this is extremely important.

While we are up against some impressive advances in technology in online training mechanisms, none of the offerings begin to match the quality and depth of the USPS courses. With that being said, I recently re-examined some of the online boater education offerings that are available to the public. In addition to the United States Power Squadron basic course, basic and advanced courses are available from organizations within all the state governments e.g.; VA DGIF, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the USCG Office of Boating Safety, many local law enforcement organizations such as the Metropolitan Police Department in DC, the US Power Boating Association (uspowerboating.com), the Recreational Powerboating Association (therpba.com), the American Sailing Association (www.ASA.com), the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) (boat-ed.com), BoatUS Foundation (boat.us.org), Boatingbasiconline.com, the SEATOW Foundation (boatingsafety.com & boaterexam.com), the American Boating Education Mechanicsville, VA (boatcourse.com) and even the Recreational Boating Industry is now sponsoring courses (discoverboating.com). As you can see, the list of offerings has grown substantially in the past few years and significantly increased what we are up against in our mission to locate and train new students and ultimately grow our shrinking membership ranks.

Let's recap the action plan. Review the NVSPS course offerings. Talk them up with your friends, neighbors and fellow boaters at the marina. If there's a training interest that we haven't addressed, request it. If you or your prospective students have questions, please ask. If each of our members brings one new person to one class, we could have a good year and a great squadron.

Lastly, I'm renewing my call for new instructor candidates. In order to expand our training capacity, we're going to need some new instructors. Never taught a course? No problem, we've got an instructor development course which will go over lesson structure and how best to present the materials. It's not hard and can be a lot of fun. Please let me know if you have other questions on this topic.

Remember, this is your squadron, let's work to keep it a good one.

America's Boating Course

11-Jun-13 ABC-12
6-Aug-13 ABC-12
24-Sep-13 ABC-12

NVSPS Course Schedule

28-May-13 Seamanship
16-Jul-13 Piloting
19-Sep-13 Advanced Piloting
14-May-13 Marine Communications
20-Jun-13 Cruise Planning
20-Aug-13 Engine Maintenance
1-Oct-13 Marine Navigation Systems

NVSPS Seminar Schedule

20-Apr-13 Mastering Rules of the Road
20-Apr-13 VHF/DSC Marine Radio
11-May-13 Anchoring
11-May-13 Using GPS
15-Jun-13 Knots Bends & Hitches
15-Jun-13 Boating on Lakes, Rivers & Locks
20-Jul-13 Basic Weather and Forecasting
20-Jul-13 Emergencies onboard
17-Aug-13 Marine Radar
17-Aug-13 How to use a chart

Contact **Sean Gallagher** at **703 548-5851** to register for a class

Lt/C Sean Gallagher JN

NVSPS Squadron Education Officer



Secretary

Lt/C Mary-Jane Hinkins, S Continued from Page 3

Maryland), Hickey Run (District of Columbia), Beaverdam Creek (District of Columbia/Maryland), Northwest Branch Anacostia River (Maryland), Sligo Creek (Maryland), Northeast Branch Anacostia River (Maryland), Paint Branch (Maryland), Four Mile Run (Virginia), Lubber Run (Virginia), Long Branch (upper) (Virginia), Doctors Run (Doctors Branch) (Virginia), Lucky Run (Virginia) (paved over), Long Branch (lower) (Virginia), Oxon Creek (District of Columbia/Maryland), Hunting Creek (Virginia), Broad Creek (Maryland), Henson Creek (Maryland), Swan Creek Maryland), Piscataway Creek (Maryland), Little Hunting Creek (Virginia), Dogue Creek (Virginia), Accotink Creek (Virginia), Pohick Creek (Virginia), Pomonkey Creek (Maryland), Occoquan River (Virginia), Bull Run (Virginia), Broad Run (Virginia), Cedar Run (Virginia), Neabsco Creek (Virginia), Powells Creek (Virginia), Mattawoman Creek (Maryland), Chicamuxen Creek (Maryland), Quantico Creek (Virginia), Little Creek (Virginia), Chopawamsic Creek (Virginia), Tank Creek (Virginia), Aquia Creek (Virginia), Potomac Creek (Virginia), Accokeek Creek (Virginia), Nanjemoy Creek (Maryland), Port Tobacco River (Maryland), Popes Creek (Maryland), Gambo Creek (Virginia), Piccowaxen Creek (Maryland), Upper Machodoc Creek (Virginia), Cuckold Creek (Maryland), Wicomico River (Maryland), Cobb Island (Maryland), Monroe Creek (Virginia), Mattox Creek (Virginia), Popes Creek (Virginia), Breton Bay, Leonardtown (Maryland), St. Marys River (Maryland), Yeocomico River (Virginia), Coan River (Virginia), Hull Creek (Virginia), Sword's Creek (Maryland). I'd say we have a lot of boating to do if we are going to see them all!

Lt/C Mary-Jane Hinkins, S

NVSPS Secretary



Guest Speaker

Ms. Mary Loose Deviney

Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries Boating Education Coordinator

Mary Loose Deviney will speak on the new Virginia boating laws and regulations that came into effect 01 January 2013. Ms. Deviney is the Virginia Boating Education Coordinator for Northern Virginia and a long-time friend of NVSPS. In addition to her professional activities with the Virginia DGIF, she also a small business owner, a volunteer with the Small Business Center, Chairman of the National Federation of Independent Businesses and serves on the Boards of the United Way -- Thomas Jefferson Area and volunteers for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Monticello Area Community Action Agency, American Legion Auxiliary, the US Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Charlottesville Albemarle Community Emergency Response Team.



Administrative Officer

Vacant

The Administrative Officer position is still vacant on the 2013/2014 Bridge. This is an important position in the Squadron as the Administrative Officer (AO) is responsible for the functions described as "internal affairs". He should be well acquainted with the Operations Manual. The committees under the Administrative Officer include: Membership, Membership Involvement, Boating Activities, Meetings and Programs, Entertainment, Operations Training and Leadership Development. If you are willing to accept this responsibility for the Squadron, or can help out with some of the administrative activities, please contact Richard Davis at 703 444-2772. Your support would be very much appreciated.

US Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics—2012

The US Coast Guard has released its Recreational Boating Statistics for 2012. This document, compiled annually, presents a detailed insight of boating accident statistics data and is available online at http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/accident_statistics.aspx. Highlights in the 2012 report are:

- In 2012, the Coast Guard counted 4,515 accidents that involved 651 deaths, 3,000 injuries and approximately \$38 million dollars of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents.
- The fatality rate was 5.4 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels. This rate represents a 12.9% decrease from last year's fatality rate of 6.2 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels.
- Compared to 2011, the number of accidents decreased 1.6%, the number of deaths decreased 14.1% and the number of injuries decreased 2.6%.
- Almost seventy-one (71) percent of all fatal boating accident victims drowned, and of those, almost eighty-five (85) percent were not reported as wearing a life jacket.
- Almost fourteen percent (14) of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had received boating safety instruction. Only nine (9) percent of deaths occurred on vessels where the operator had received boating safety instruction from a NASBLA approved course provider.
- Seven out of every ten boaters who drowned were using vessels less than 21 feet in length.
- Operator inattention, operator inexperience, improper lookout, machinery failure, and excessive speed rank as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents. Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; it was listed as the leading factor in 17% of deaths.
- Twenty-four children under age thirteen lost their lives while boating in 2012. Ten children or approximately forty-two (42) percent of the children who died in 2012 died from drowning. Two children or twenty (20) percent of those who drowned were wearing a life jacket as required by state and federal law.
- The most common types of vessels involved in reported accidents were open motorboats (47%), personal watercraft (19%), and cabin motorboats (15%).
- The 12,101,936 recreational vessels registered by the states in 2012 represent a 0.59% decrease from last year when 12,173,935 recreational vessels were registered.

District 5/27 Crossing Paths Reunion

The combined District 5/27 2013 Summer Council & Rendezvous is being held from Friday 9 August through Sunday 11 August at the very attractive Kings Creek Marina in Cape Charles, VA.

Building on the enormous success of the jointly conducted 2009 event, there will be the traditional Navigation Contest, a Poker Run (for the smaller boats), BOC on-the-water IN certification, games for all ages, music, strolling the streets of a small Eastern Shore town, USPS fellowship, and we wouldn't be USPS members if we didn't throw-in a little food. And there will be very special one-time-only USPS Centennial celebration activities including the Squadron Centennial Ribbons Ceremony and Centennial Boat Parade. A registration form for the event is available at http://www.uspsd5.org/events/2013/201308_reservation_form.pdf

Our Members are very fortunate to have their choice of two cruises that lead-up to Cape Charles rendezvous arrivals on Thursday 8 August, in time for an open-house welcome party. A chili-and-salad dinner hosted by D/5 DAO Fuzzy Jones followed by desserts hosted by D/27 will greet Thursday arrivals. Our traditional District Summer Cruise, chaired by P/D/C Ralph Bernard (609-625-0031 or rb3513@comcast.net), will come down the Chesapeake Bay with stops at Herrington Harbour, Solomons, St. Mary's Creek, and Tides. Please contact Ralph to sign-up.

And brand new for 2013, our Sail Around DelMarVa Cruise, chaired by Sft/Cdr Alan Karpas (301-767-5905 or alankarpas@verizon.net), will venture out into the Atlantic with stops at Maryland Yacht Club and Summit North Marina or Reedy Island Anchorage. Please contact Alan to sign-up.

Operation Dry Water - June 28-30, 2013

A National BUI Enforcement and Education Campaign

With boating under the influence continuing to be a major factor in accidents and deaths on our nation's waterways, thousands of officers with local, state and federal agencies will again team up for Operation Dry Water (ODW) in a coordinated effort to be on the water providing heightened enforcement and awareness about the dangers of boating under the influence of drugs or alcohol.



Operation Dry Water 2013 is June 28-30, just before the Fourth of July, a holiday known for drinking and boating, and deadly accidents. Operation Dry Water is a nationwide education and enforcement initiative launched by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Since the launch of Operation Dry Water in 2009, the percentage of boating fatalities with alcohol listed as a contributing factor has decreased from 19% to 17% in the United States. Despite the decrease, BUI still accounts for a disproportional number of on-the-water deaths. In 2011, alcohol was a contributing factor in just 8 percent of boating accidents overall, but figured in 17 percent of boating fatalities.

In 2012, 51 states and U.S. territories participated in Operation Dry Water. More than 4,500 officers from 505 local, state, and federal agencies participated in 72 hours of heightened BUI enforcement. Officers were able to remove 337 BUI operators from the water while issuing an additional 14,514 boating safety citations and warnings. In addition, law enforcement officers made contact with over 113,000 boaters concerning BUI or boating safety enforcement and awareness. From 2009 to 2012 over 1,200 BUI operators have been removed from the water and over 313,500 boaters have been contacted by a law enforcement officer during the Operation Dry Water weekends.

In 2013 NASBLA's Operation Dry Water received the national Horizon Award, from the National Safe Boating Council, for the campaign's dedication to moving the cause of recreational boating safety to a new level. The campaign was also recognized for its encouragement to boaters to take a pledge to make wise decisions about alcohol use, and to NEVER drink while boating.

Toby Velasquez, NASBLA president, says, "Operation Dry Water has proven to be a successful campaign. I encourage every local, state and federal agency tasked with boating law enforcement to participate in this worthwhile BUI enforcement and awareness effort."

Officers from all 56 U.S. states, trusts and territories are expected to participate in Operation Dry Water 2013 by educating the public and providing heightened BUI enforcement for the safety of those operating a vessel as well as other boaters on the water.

For more information on this annual event, visit operationdrywater.org.

Did you Know?.....

- A boat operator is likely to become impaired more quickly than a driver, drink for drink?
- 6, 12 oz. beers over two hours will make a 180 pound person legally intoxicated?
- The penalties for BUI can include large fines, revocation of operator privileges and serious jail terms?
- The use of alcohol is involved in about a third of all recreational boating fatalities?

Improve Your Chances of Survival When Abandoning Ship

Good preparation and proper use of safety equipment is key

The NTSB recently investigated an accident that required the crew to abandon a weather-damaged liftboat in near-hurricane-force conditions. Several problems leading up to and during the vessel abandonment negatively impacted the 10 crewmembers' probability of survival once they were in the water, and four of them died as a result:

- The company (vessel owner) hurricane plan did not account for rapidly and locally developing low pressure weather systems. This reduced the crewmembers' ability to properly plan for the developing storm and to make an early decision to leave the vessel through routine means before the onset of the storm.
- The vessel had recently been equipped with two new inflatable throw-over-type liferafts. However, the liferafts were inflated on deck instead of in the water when the crew prepared to abandon the vessel. This led to the liferafts blowing away from the vessel and vanishing in the high winds and seas. The crewmembers ended up clinging to a lifefloat, which, unlike the liferafts, did not provide out-of-water flotation, shelter from the elements, and nonperishable food and drinking water.

Continued on Page 8

16th Boardman Youth Poster Contest



For many of us, kids are very much a part of our boating lifestyle. The love boating and being on the water as much as their parents/grandparents do. They also enjoy researching boating subjects and expressing their creativity. The Boardman Youth Post Contest is the perfect avenue for them to participate in the favorite family pastime.

The contest is open to all kids from age 6 to 14. The theme this year is, “100 Years of Wearing It.” (The “It”, of course, is the PDF). You know you must wear a lifejacket or PFD (Personal Floation Device) when topside on a boat.

Do you know when boaters started wearing PFDs? What they looked like? How they were made? How they have changed over the last 100 years? Encourage your children/grandchildren to search for some clues to answer these questions. They can take all summer long to draw a poster showing what they have learned; judging won't be until Fall Conference. What a great rainy day activity for a group of kids to share information and then have fun drawing posters.

For more information, go to the USPS National website – www.usps.org – to get the rules and regulations or you can e-mail me at wind6769@aol.com to get more information

Have a great summer and always remember to be safe and wear your PFDs when out on the water.

D/Lt Bea Norris
D/5 Youth Poster Contest

...Survival *(...Continued from page 7)*

- Although the crewmembers had gathered additional food, drinking water, and other supplies while preparing to evacuate, they failed to take these with them.
- The vessel was equipped with an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB), which if activated would have quickly alerted authorities and narrowed the search area. However, the crewmembers did not take the EPIRB with them when they abandoned the vessel. As a result, they spent 3 days in the water before search and rescue assets were able to locate them.

Although this tragic event happened to a commercial fishing vessel, the lessons learned from this experience are applicable to pleasure craft boaters as well. While most of us avoid hurricane situations and never anticipate being in such a situation weather in our area can turn suddenly, or accidents (collision, fire) can occur, which might place any of us in a condition where abandoning your vessel is a necessity. Would you know what to do? Here are some items you should consider:

- **Develop and practice an abandon ship preparedness plan.** Ensure that your plan takes into account know your position, notifying the Coast Guard of your distress, location and access of your emergency equipment and provisions for your survival.
- **Ensure you know how to use safety equipment.** Don't wait until a real emergency to find out whether you know how to properly use lifesaving equipment. Conduct frequent drills with your family/crew with a step-by-step assessment of all such equipment.
- **Plan before evacuating.** Before an emergency, ensure you know your assigned duties and responsibilities—such as who's bringing what supplies—and ensure the responsible person is aware of the location of those items.
- **Drill as if it is a real emergency.** Conducting realistic drills gets the attention of family/crew, builds their confidence and proficiency in emergency response procedures, and reinforces a strong safety culture.
- **Follow your plan.** In emergency situations involving high stress and exhaustion, ensure all aspects are covered by running through step-by-step emergency procedures in accordance with established checklists.
- **Develop an “Overboard Bag”.** Create an emergency overboard (waterproof) bag with emergency essentials that can be easily grabbed as you abandon the boat. Equip the bag with a VHF radio, GPS unit, flashlights, signaling devices/beacons, an EPIRB unit (and/or personal locator) and one quart of drinking water per person for coastal waters, five quarts for offshore waters.
- **Stay together in the water.** Search and rescue personnel will more easily spot a group of people in the water than dispersed swimmers.

Always avoid placing yourself, family, friends or crew in harm's way, but always plan and prepare for the worst. - Boat safe.



Boating Tips

Early Season Maintenance Tips *Courtesy of www.AnnapolisYachtSales.com*

Now that your boating season is underway, don't forget that continual maintenance is the key to trouble-free, enjoyable boating. The following tips will help remind you of what it takes to keep your boat running and systems on board working as they should.

1: Bottom Cleaning and Zincs -- If your boat has been in the water all winter long, or if you launched early this spring, it is time to get the bottom cleaned and zincs checked and changed!! The water temperature is steadily rising and things are beginning to grow quickly on your boat's bottom. Chances are that your bottom and running gear (prop(s), shaft(s) rudder(s)) is getting dirty. Clean bottoms and running gear make for fast, smooth, and efficient sailing and motoring. Call your local trustworthy diver and get your bottom and running gear all cleaned up! If you don't already have a diver working for you, ask around the marina for recommendations- word of mouth is the best way to find good contractors. Many yards also offer short-haul out specials for power washing and zinc changes during the warm summer months.

2: The Bilge -- Don't forget the bilge! As the weather warms up and the season progresses so does the chance of water accumulating in the bilge. We all know that a boat's bilge can be a breeding ground for mold and mildew. Be sure to check the condition of your bilge frequently and either give it a good flush with bleach or bilge cleaner (if you normally have a wet bilge) or if you are used to a dry bilge like many of the newer boats have, make sure it is staying that way!! Lift up those boards and see what's underneath!! Do this regularly and your boat will smell better and you will breathe easier!! Make sure you have a small wet vac on board to help you keep things dry!!

3: Air Filters -- Don't choke me!! Make sure you check and clean your return air filters on your air conditioning systems and refrigeration systems. Dust, lint, pet hair, etc build up very quickly on the return filters. Regular cleaning of these filters will keep systems running cool and efficiently.

4: Holding Tank -- Speaking of choking...Don't forget to keep that holding tank clean!! Pump out on a regular basis! Do not get a false sense of comfort thinking that your holding tank is only 1/3 full and that it has only filled up that much in the last two months - (I can hear it now.... "at that rate, I won't have to pump out for another 4 months"). Leaving any amount of waste in the tank for any extended period of time is a BAD IDEA!! Overtime, the waste will compact, and essentially turn into a nice thick paste or worse yet, dry out completely and harden like concrete. Trust us, we have seen it! Leaving waste in the tank and hoses longer than it needs to be there will only cause clogging problems, buildup of calcium, and an ODOR that will knock you flat on your back!! For those of you who are flushing with salt water, consider using fresh water instead. Close your seawater intake and use your shower nozzle to flush with. This will greatly reduce the amount of odor from your holding tank and hoses since there are no (or should not be!) any critters in the fresh water you flush with. An alternative is to get your toilet plumbed to fresh water. We recommend pumping your holding tank out after each visit. If that is not feasible pump it out at a minimum every other week.

5: Water Tanks -- Keep your water tanks fresh too! Have you ever turned on your galley water tap and noticed a foul smell flowing out? If you have, you probably have not used the water in a while, right? ...RIGHT!! If you are not avidly filling and draining your water tanks, make sure that you flush them out on regular basis. Adding a small amount of chlorine bleach to each tank as you flush them out will also assist in keeping them fresh. Off the shelf water conditioning products are also available at your local boating supply store. If you do not use much water on board, consider leaving one or more of your tanks dry (really dry - like shop vacuumed out and air dried - dry). This will help reduce the amount of time you need to set aside to keep the system fresh.

6: Raw Water Sea Strainers -- Make sure to regularly check your sea strainers for debris and growth. Clean and unrestricted water flow make for happy engines, generators and air-conditioning systems!

7: General Cleaning -- Lastly, don't forget to keep things clean in general. A clean boat is a happy boat and a happy boat makes for happy owners, guests and great memories that will last a lifetime!!



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