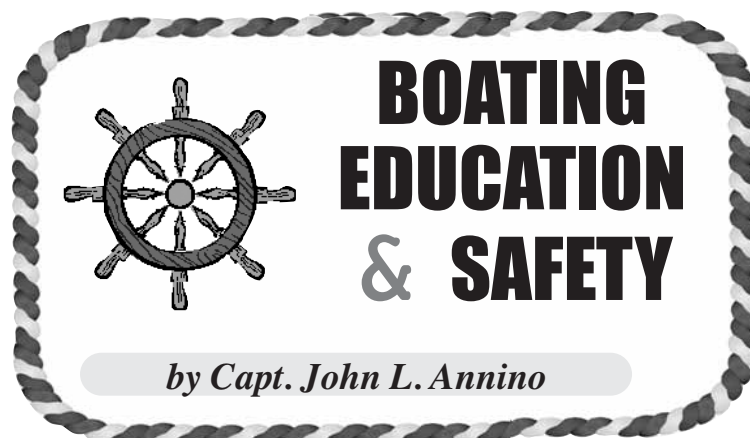


In our last article, we discussed buoys that have lateral significance, Red-Right-Returning, buoy numbering and how these aids to navigation are used. When going upriver, in a channel they are most useful in guiding you. Now let us imagine we are going up that same river and we come face-to-face with an island. Do we go around the island to the right side (starboard channel) or to the left side (port channel)? When we have a junction between two channels the Coast Guard will put a "Junction Buoy", the proper name being a "Preferred Channel Marker". Back in the old days, they were known as "Bifurcation Buoys".

These 'preferred channel markers' are the same shape as the buoys having lateral significance discussed in the last issue. There are only two differences - 1) they have letters rather than numbers and - 2) they exhibit both red and green colors. Let us start with the letters. The 'preferred channel markers' have letters for identification purposes. For example, if you approach one of these buoys with the letters "PI" painted on it, you should be able to refer to the nautical chart for the area and locate a buoy marked "PI". This is a way of identifying your position on the chart.

The second difference is a little harder to explain. Because we are at a junction be-



Aids To Navigation Preferred Channel Markers

tween two channels (2 sides of the island), the 'preferred channel marker' will have two colors on it. The only thing you should concern yourself with is the top color. The top color indicates the preferred channel. If it's a lighted buoy and the top color is green; it will have a green light. If the top color is red, it will have a red light. On the unlighted buoys, if the top color is red, it's shaped like a red nun buoy. If the top color is green, it's shaped like a green can buoy. On daymarks, if the top color is red, it's shaped like a red triangle, and if the top color is green, it's shaped like a green square. When using these buoys, all of the same red-right-returning rules are observed.

Let's try to visualize an example. We are traveling up the Connecticut River from Old Saybrook (Long Island Sound) to Hart-

ford. We have our chart open and are navigating the channel using the lateral buoys. We come to an island and have to make a decision to go around on the right or left side. Our chart tells us that the right side is only four feet deep, and the left side is eighteen feet deep. Obviously, the left side is the preferred channel. Another way to say that is the preferred channel is to port. We are looking at a 'preferred channel marker' in front of us. What color is on top? If you said red, you are correct. Going upstream red-right-returning tells us to keep the red buoys on our right

side. This can only be done by using the channel to port. Still having trouble? Picture this.... you come to the island and to the right; it is in-passable due to the presence of rocks. The preferred channel marker would be replaced by an all red nun buoy (not a two-color junction buoy) in the river telling you that you MUST go to the left side of the island.

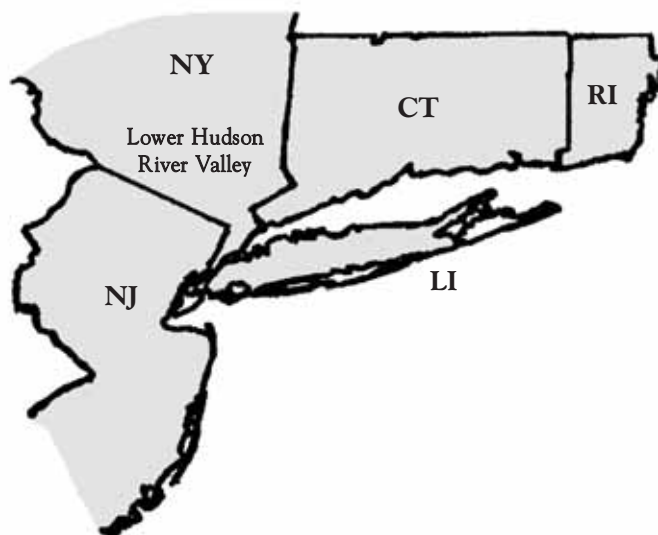
Preferred channel markers can be of great assistance when navigating. The next time you are on the water and see one, try to locate it on the chart and identify the two channels. This will give you a better understanding of how they are used.

In our next issue, we will talk about 'Mid-channel' markers and 'Range' markers. Until then....Safe Boating

Sell Your Boat *Fast* With Our Classified "BEST BUY" Package

Cover the waterfront in four states when you advertise in all three editions of Boating World.

Only \$39 including a color photo of your boat!



For details see the ad form in our Classified section

Boating World

Your Local Boating Paper

Long Island Edition • Sound Edition (Westchester, NY, CT, RI) • NJ/Hudson River Edition