

Dear Cap'n Drew: I hate to write to you for this reason, but I'm very offended by your comments made in the "Ask Cap'n Drew" column for the month of July 2007. Specifically- Ten signs you didn't winterize your boat properly. Point 2. *A family of immigrants has moved in.*

As an immigrant myself, this comment is offensive to say the least. We can't accept this behavior anymore. Immigrants have helped built this great country and we can't discriminate against them (us) or any other community. There are many unscrupulous people out there who would love to publish their discriminatory comments against African-Americans, Asians, Mexicans etc. but fortunately most media companies will not allow them on the air or in their periodicals. Like me, I'm sure there are MANY other immigrants who would be offended by this note. I hope to see an apology in your next edition.

Thanks,
Juan Carlos Limon España (no location given)

Dear Juan: You are referring to my Top Ten List of Signs that You Didn't Winterize Your Boat Properly with #2 being, "A family of immigrants have moved in." I had briefly toyed with the idea of writing "A family of well-established, upper-middle class Protestants have moved in," but it just didn't come off as funny. Truth is, we are ALL immigrants. Even the Native Americans immigrated across the Bering Strait thousands of years ago. No one is native to this country.

To quote Bill Murray in the classic movie *Stripes*, "We're all very different people...we're Americans! With a capital A, and do you know what that means? That means that our forefathers were kicked out of every decent country in the world!"

One side of my family emigrated here in the 1850's where one brother landed in Georgia and the other in New York. Each was handed a gun and uniform and fought for years against each other in a war which they barely understood (their descendants have fought in every American war since). Sixty years later, other family members came over and lived in filthy tenements in lower Manhattan. On the other side of the family, just last generation, immigrates with a few nickels in their pockets worked long hours and lived under the poverty level. This joke applies to immigrants from any of the 194 countries in the world, (including my own family.) Many people emigrate to America just to have the right of free speech! Sometimes a joke is just a joke. Personally, I welcome all immigrants- especially those with good fishing tips. All the best.

Dear Cap'n Drew: I recently purchased my first boat, a used 1994 23' Rinker. After a day of cruising, I was heading home when one of the water lines sprang a very large leak. I began to overheat, so I



by Capt. Drew Brown

called for a tow. After being towed home, I had the hose replaced. Does this kind of thing happen often? Is there any type of patch kit that I should be carrying? I'm still pretty new at this and am trying to get as much information as I can. I'd appreciate any help that you can offer.

Chris in New Jersey

Dear Chris: The three most important things that you should bring out with you are a screwdriver, a pair of pliers and a roll of duct tape. I have been stuck everywhere in the Northeast and have found that, if these things can't get you home, then you probably need a crane. Duct tape can fix almost any problem. The beauty of it is that, after a few days, it turns invisible- you can hardly even notice the tape. I didn't realize how far it had gone until my mother came out and brought it to my attention that my boat looked like a patchwork quilt.

Dear Cap'n Drew: Love your column. It's always nice to know we all do dumb stuff, messing about in boats.

Alas, I do enjoy reading incorrect interpretation of nautical figures of speech. English must consist of 20 percent words and phrases of which we have forgotten the origins. "Three sheets to the wind" is a reference to a missed tack in a square-rigged ship. The closest modern equivalent is the horrible mess that results when a sailboat accidentally jibes spinnaker, finding it thoroughly plastered to the rigging, often as not torn. The square sails on the ships of the last century were set from yards (those big wooden poles hanging crossways from the mast), and in order to tack the ship (go from one windward tack to another) it was necessary to shift the sails, one at a time, with the wind blowing the wrong way on the canvas, in order to get them to the other side, trim them in, and proceed upwind on the opposite tack. If this shifting was not done in the correct sequence and at the correct moment, a sail would be pinned against the mast and rigging, and it would be impossible to shift the sail without reversing the process and starting over. More often than not, it would be necessary

to "wear the ship", the phrase for a 270° turn in the opposite direction. Any boat caught with three sheets "to the wind", or on the windward side, was substantially out of control and would be staggering to one side, not going forward, and only able to regain smooth sailing with some effort. Some of the sails would be pulling forward, some of the sails would be pulling aft, with the pressure of the wind preventing the mass from being sorted out easily- very embarrassing for both the captain and crew.

Read "Two Years Before The Mast" by Richard Henry Dana, Jr. if you would like a full immersion in salty language.

For the record, "trying times" is a reference to time spent hove to under try-sail, a small triangular storm sail that you would employ only in horribly full storm conditions. Any time a try-sail was needed, were tough times indeed.

The Frye Family (no location given)

Dear Frys: Thanks for the specifics on the term "Three sheets...". Thanks also for the sailing lesson- although you lost me after "jibes the spinnaker." I'm more familiar with "turn the key." I haven't heard of "Two Years before the Mast"...is it funny? Those interested in the origins of nautical terms should also read "Salty Dog Talk: The Nautical Origins of Everyday Expressions" by Bill Beavis and Richard G. McCloskey.

Ten Unpleasant Things to Overhear From Your Guest's Stateroom

"Just don't tell them, they'll never notice."

"What does this smell like to you?"

"The boat-beds may be uncomfortable, but let's break it in anyway!"

"Pass the Tinactin."

"Darn, I thought that Duke was completely house-trained."

"I can never keep my lunch down on one of these things."

"I think someone's coming, put your pants on."

"This boat's plumbing is no match for Hank"

"Don't worry, if your underwear turns up, I'm sure they'll return it."

"Just lance it and be done with it already!"

Cap'n Drew Brown has been boating for fifteen years with his wife, Meg (Windlass), and their three children, Fender and Cleat and Stay. He is the author of the boating humor book "What's A Hoy? A Guide to Modern Boating." Send questions via e-mail to capn@capndrew.com or visit his website at www.capndrew.com.

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