

Fourth of July Fireworks By Boat

by Gary P. Joyce



While there are plenty of landside fireworks being held on the Fourth of July (including the one being held by your sister's brother-in-law's uncle who just got a delivery from Jimmy Truckload who found a box that "accidentally" fell off a mysterious semi en route to who knows where), there are other fireworks going to be held this weekend that are best viewed by water, that is to say, from your boat.

With that in mind, what follows is the annual *Long Island Boating World* guide to some of the most popular and traditional watch-by-boat fireworks in our area for this year's Fourth of July celebrations.

If you're planning on attending any of these, we also offer the following tips:

- If you're bringing someone aboard your boat for the first time, make them take Dramamine, etc., especially if they "never get seasick" on any boat (read: ferry) on which they've ever traveled. There's no point in ruining a terrific evening because of *mal de mer*.

- Bring extra fenders for rafting-up and extra line to rig your boat to others. Rafting-up is always fun, but often the friend of a friend of a buddy may not be quite as skilled as you think *you* are.

- The earlier you arrive and drop the hook at your chosen spot, the better. The more room you have to let out realistic scope and account for tide, wind or current swings, the better.

- Make sure those requiring it wear life jackets; the last thing you want is a child oohing and ahhing right over the rails. It also doesn't hurt to make sure everybody aboard – especially any first timers – can swim.

- Leave any imbibing of anything alcoholic until you're safely back at the home dock unless you're anchoring out. And even then, go easy. This is night boating and not everybody is familiar, at ease or competent to run at night. And if you aren't, don't make a crowded anchorage on the Fourth of July your first attempt. Consider anchoring out until daylight.

The tide data in this article comes from two sources: the NOAA tables and www.saltwatertides.com. Times are given in 24-hour clock. Nonetheless, check your own tide tables before setting out, and if you haven't updated your charts for the season, do so. Believe me, there's nothing worse than looking for a buoy that's been relocated!

Macy's 4th of July Fireworks Display, NYC

This is the granddaddy of them all, and if you haven't seen it live – from the water or land – you owe it to yourself to do so. It's the 32nd year of this popular and stupendous event, and this year it returns to the Hudson River for the first time since 2000 to celebrate America's birthday with the nation's largest 4th of July fireworks display and to kick off the 400th anniversary of the exploration of the Hudson River by Henry Hudson. The patriotic revelry will feature approximately 40,000 shells exploding in a kaleidoscope of color at a rate of more than 1,500 per minute. The 26-minute display, designed in collaboration with SOUSA Fireworks, will be set off from six barges positioned between 24th and 50th Streets on the Hudson River.

The Macy's 4th of July Fireworks Show will kick off on July 4 around 2100. Viewing information and other spectator tips will be available in June at www.macys.com/fireworks or by calling the Macy's fireworks hotline at 212-494-4495. Music timed to the show will be aired on 1010 WINS. The website for the shoot is www.macys.com.

NOAA Chart 12334 and/or 12335 (and if you haven't been there before, throw in Chart 12349). Low tide at the Williamsburg Bridge is 1328, high at 2004 and then low again at 0215 on July 5.

Port Jefferson

The annual fireworks display in Port Jefferson will be held off East Beach again, east of the harbor mouth at dusk on July 4. There are usually a bunch of town-related festivities accompanying this, so you might want to consider anchoring up in the harbor for the day, and if you have a good dinghy, try the Sandhole on the east side of the harbor just about 1.5 nm inside the harbor entrance.

NOAA Chart for Port Jefferson is 12354. Port Jefferson Harbor will see low tide at 1608 and high at 2218. Dusk should be about two hours before high tide.

To moor in the harbor, call 631-689-8262; with only about two-dozen transient moorings, call now, otherwise you're on your own.

The Pines

There'll be a Grucci state-level show at the Pines on Fire Island on July 4 accompanying the Fund in the Sun celebration. This is billed as the largest gay, lesbian, transgender, etc. beach party in

the world, so if that's not your cup of tea, anchor off for the fireworks, which will go off at dark. GSB tides at Patchogue are low at 1557 going high at 2158, so it's perfect for watching the show. NOAA 12352 should cover you.

Point O' Woods

The Point O' Woods Fire Department's celebration is on July 3. Point O' Woods is directly opposite Heckscher State Park. The 110-year old town that even Fire Island time has passed by is located between Ocean Bay Park on the west and Sailor's Haven on the east. The NOAA Chart is 12352. You should have mean low water at around 1413, high at 2023.

Southampton

This is a private fundraiser for the Southampton Fresh Air Home and is in its 22nd year. Some of the sponsorships for this event draw five digit donations and tickets are \$500, but anything is accepted, so assuage your guilt and send them some money. The organization provides camp facilities for handicapped children. Call 631-283-5847 for info. You can view this Grucci show in Shinnecock Bay on July 3rd. NOAA chart is 12352. High tide at Ponquogue Point is 1750 with the low coming in around 0031 on July 4th. Pay attention to the buoyed channels when navigating around the southern end of Shinnecock Bay.

Sag Harbor

The Sag Harbor Yacht Club party is private, but the fireworks can be viewed by all. The SHYC's *Happy Birthday America* party is on July 4; figure about 2130 for the start. The best viewing spots are outside the breakwater or in the town anchorage. You'll also be able to view it pretty much anywhere between the southern end of North Haven peninsula and Northwest Harbor off Mashomack Point on Shelter Island. Do pay attention to the tide and your chart and depth sounder if you choose to anchor up north-east and east of the breakwater; there are some very shoaling and rocky waters adjacent to all the deeper channels that are well marked. NOAA Chart 12358. Low tide is 1508 with high flooding in by 2120.

Shelter Island

The Shelter Island show will be held July 11 (apparently those tasty piping plovers might not be

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hatched by July 5, so rather than risk canceling the show, they moved the date). The show is off Crescent Beach around 2100. Crescent Beach is on the northwest side of the island and is the long, arcing stretch between the North Ferry (opposite Greenport) and Jennings Point. Good viewing points are the northern reaches of Southold Bay, Pipes Cove and the south side of the Greenport/Shelter Island channel; there is very deep and fast water in the channel proper. NOAA Chart 12358. Low tide at Greenport is right around 2008, going high at 0215 on July 12; Cedar Point is about 15-20 minutes earlier across the board.

Jones Beach

The Jones Beach fireworks show will be held on July 4, with the show due to go off around 2100. Best anchorage, naturally, is Zachs Bay, but have good ground tackle and more fenders than usual because it gets quite crowded and there seems to be more than the usual number of boaters who haven't a clue what they're doing. Fortunately, the area is well patrolled by a number of agencies from town to federal levels. If it's calm, go outside and drop

the hook about a half-mile east of the water tower in about 20 feet of water (about a quarter mile off). NOAA Chart is 12352. Figure low tides to be around 1522 in Gilgo Heading and high at 2106.

New London

There will be a Grucci "world" level show called the Mashantucket Pequot Fireworks Show on the Thames in New London on July 11 in conjunction with 31st Annual Sailfest. Anchor in the area between Fort Trumbull and the ferry piers (your chart should have it marked as an anchorage area). For information about the show and Sailfest, call 860-444-1879, or go to: www.sailfest.org. Tides at the piers will be low around 2004 with sunset not too much later. High tide is 0155 on July 12. NOAA Chart 12372.

Montauk

The Montauk Chamber of Commerce's paean to the Fourth goes off after dusk on July 4 off Umbrella Beach. For more info contact the Montauk Chamber of Commerce at 631-668-2428. High tide on the ocean should be low during the shoot.

Shooting the Fourth

For starters, you're not going to get a shot off

a boat, so break out the oars and dinghy and head for shore if you want a chance at some decent shots. For film cameras, it's hands-down an SLR (single lens reflex), but few people use them anymore. A DSLR (digital single lens reflex) beats a DPOS (digital point and shoot) by far and in capable hands will produce as good, if not better, than a film SLR. The principles and possibilities are virtually the same, save for the instant gratification of the DSLR.

You'll want a tripod and solid land for the best results. If you can find a shutter release for your camera — no matter what kind — that's a plus, since it takes away any shake pushing the release button will cause

Technique for a digital? Well, once you get the shot — the area where the fireworks are supposed to be — composed, pull the trigger (so to speak) and keep pulling it. You might want to bring some extra memory as well.

Once the technical aspects are taken care of, composition will make or break a photo — film or digital. Try to include some kind of identifiable object in the lower foreground. Your boat, a bridge, kids' faces ... anything.





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