

ABYSMAL RESPONSE TO T/S HANNA

Eight days prior to Tropical Storm Hanna's landfall in the Metropolitan Area, the marina engaged in concerted efforts to alert slipholders of her arrival. At one point, there were three possible hurricanes being tracked



(Hanna, Ike and Gustav) on the Security Office window. With a stable system of high pressure in the Western Atlantic, all three had the early potential to track along the bottom edge of the high and back up the eastern coast of the United States. A special marina advisory was e-mailed to all slipholders that "Hanna is coming here" instructing all to begin preparation of their vessels by doubling lines and chafing gear. Three days out, when Hanna's estimated track showed she would cross the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, the marina stopped normal operations and switched exclusively to hurricane preparations activating portions of the marina's Severe Weather Preparedness Plan. The only question was whether Hanna was going pass the regions as a hurricane (and if so how big) or something less. Three days out, all slipholders were sent a second e-mail from the D.C. Alert system while simultaneously the Captain of the Port activated the USCG Upper Chesapeake Bay Hurricane Plan establishing Condition Whiskey. If you're wondering what all this means, it's time for you to review the Gangplank Marina's Severe Weather Plan. A training for D.C. Clean Marinas on hurricane preparedness was recently delivered by the marina which featured our plan.

The lessons learned from the mini-exercise that T/S Hanna visited are simple and straight forward:

- Seventy-five percent of slipholders failed to make any preparations for their vessel.
- Numerous slipholders are under the impression they can "phone this one in" by merely stating they are out of town and the marina staff will prepare their vessel for them.

These misapprehensions are serious errors with respect to what the marina will do when the plan is activated and what your responsibilities are as a matter of law to other slipholders and the marina when you fail to take prudent measures to prepare your vessel. Part of this problem is the lack of experience in this region with tropical storms. Another significant part of the lack of response is the past historical practices of the marina during these storms and the failure to communicate slipholders' obligations as a matter of maritime law.

If you have not already done so, please take this opportunity to read the plan on the marina's website. There are still almost sixty days left in the hurricane season with the most active months being September and October.

Hurricanes are deadly serious and the marina is deadly serious about protecting life and property when our region's number comes up.


CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMING SOON

The Deputy Mayor's Office has approved the Marina's capital budget for 2009 and, in our continuing efforts to make the marina a better and safer place to work and play, some of the capital improvements you will soon see include:


Complete Remodeling of the Men's and Women's Restrooms—The lion's share of 2009's capital budget will go to a complete remodeling of the restrooms. This work will start almost immediately in order to have both the men's and women's

restrooms complete before the onset of winter weather. The remodeling is planned to include new granite sinks, new shower stalls, new flooring and a more contemporary and comfortable décor throughout. For those slipholders who were here during the last remodeling of the restrooms (2005), you will recall that this process involves closing one of the restrooms for remodeling and keeping the other restroom open on an odd even schedule. During odd hours the restroom will be for women. During even hours the restroom will be for men. We apologize for the inconvenience this will cause for about six-to-eight weeks while all remodeling is complete but, the current restrooms are looking tired and we need to insure they can accommodate slipholders, guests and visitors with disabilities.

**STARTING AS EARLY AS MONDAY OCTOBER 6TH,
STAGGERED ODD /EVEN SCHEDULE FOR THE
RESTROOM NOT BEING REMODELED**



ODD HOURS



EVEN HOURS

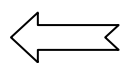
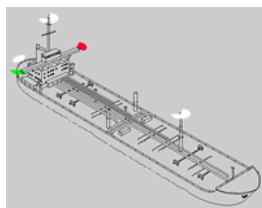
Parking Lot Resurfacing—The marina’s parking lot has taken a beating over the years primarily from the large trucks which serve Odyssey and Cantina. The islands at the end are destroyed and denuded of vegetation and the surface is showing many cracks which will only get worse in the spring if we don’t seal the surface in the next thirty days. Although the exact date is still being coordinated with the paving contractor, within the next thirty days we will begin resurfacing operations WHICH WILL REQUIRE ALL VEHICLES TO BE REMOVED AND REMAIN OUTSIDE THE LOT FOR 24 TO 48 HOURS as the surface cures. We will attempt to make this

upgrade as painless as possible. However, you should begin to scout out street spots and prepare for one to two days of parking outside the lot.

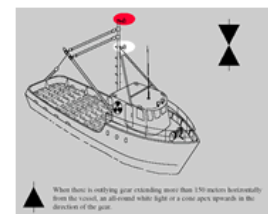
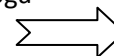
Landscaping and Erosion Control—Closely associated with sealing the parking lot are two distinct landscaping projects. First is addressing the torn up islands, the worst of which will be leveled and replaced with Belgian Pavers (most of Baltimore City’s Belgian pavers are actually recycled ballast stone from the 1700’s and 1800’s). These stones will also be placed along various sections of the median strip which separates the bulkhead esplanade from the marina’s parking lot (by the Block House and Odyssey Offices) and the remainder of this strip will be boxed with 6”x6” timbers for the planting of Cherry Blossom Trees and Crape Myrtle. Finally, the marina must address the erosion on the hill between Water St. and the parking lot. This is a two step process which requires the District of Columbia to designate a 100’ area on the marina’s side of Water Street SW as a loading zone followed by the construction of an AEDPA timber ramp from the loading zone into the marina’s parking lot and finally, a closure of the parking lot to all delivery vehicles. The area immediately adjacent to the blue fence surrounding the dumpster area has reverted to little more than a dirt hill which is depositing sediment in the parking lot. The sediment represents an unacceptable environmental condition which must be mitigated before sediment is deposited into the Washington Channel. Because many individuals use this area as an informal short cut into the marina, it is difficult if not impossible to maintain vegetation barriers. The intent is to provide an aesthetically pleasing walkway (the timber ramp will switch back around the large tree by the blue fence) so that ground cover can be reestablished and further erosion controlled.

USCGC CUYAHOGA SANK 30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

On the night of October 20, 1978, the Captain of the USCG cutter Cuyahoga thought he saw



Approaching it from its port side, what was actually in front of him.



WHY DOES THIS MATTER??? (Read the next article)

THE SINKING OF THE USCGC CUYAHOGA

At 9:00 pm on October 20, 1978, the USCG *Cuyahoga*, the longest serving U.S. government vessel with fifty-one years of service in the Navy and the Coast Guard, was three miles north of Smith Light making way north at 12 knots, preparing to turn west into the Potomac River. Fifteen minutes later she would be on the bottom with eleven hands lost.

In earlier days, the *Cuyahoga* had been a familiar site on the Washington Channel. Originally commissioned in 1927, her first six years were spent intercepting rum runners during prohibition. In 1933, she arrived at the Washington Navy Yard and was commissioned by the Navy as a tender to the Presidential Yacht *Potomac* (now moored in Oakland, California) and would subsequently become a tender to the Presidential Yacht *Sequoia*.

Eight years later she was returned to Coast Guard service and spent most of World War II on escort duty between Guantanamo Bay, Trinidad and Paramaribo. After the war, she was assigned to the Coast Guard yards at Curtis Bay, Maryland; New London, Connecticut; and ultimately, Yorktown, Virginia.

On the last night of her life, she was on a nighttime training mission out of Yorktown with a compliment of 29 crew including two officers from the Indonesian Navy. Her commanding officer was Donald K. Robinson, a 26-year Coast Guard veteran who learned his seamanship hands-on by serving on eight different vessels. The *Cuyahoga* was not only his first command but his first sea assignment in six years.

The spring had brought that unfortunate bridge closing at Curtis Bay in Baltimore which cost the ship its radar antennae followed by a rough mooring on Yorktown's granite seawall; but, on this fall evening, Robinson was on the bridge, the weather was perfect, visibility was unlimited and his thoughts centered on the *Cuyahoga's* turn and run up the Potomac. There had been sleepless nights for several days and worries about the young men in his command. On the bridge with him were Seaman Apprentice Myers and Officer of the Deck Fairchild. Aft, in the *Cuyahoga's* chart room, Indonesian Navy Lt. Arisamita was manning the radar with the ship's navigator, Quartermaster Rose. Rose had no formal

radar training but, had learned on the fly. Likewise, Lt. Arisamita had no prior radar training. At this point it would be easy to attribute the lack of radar on the bridge plus no on-deck crew with any formal radar training as a contributing factor to what happened next; however, the lack of bridge radar or experienced operators had nothing to do with it.

Instead, both the story tellers and the jury at his court martial a year later make it all come down to Robinson's initial misperception and the subsequent data he received which he interpreted consistent with his first mistake

Fairchild first identified lights on the northern horizon and reported this sighting to Robinson. Robinson confirmed the sighting and interpreted the lights as a white masthead light and a red port running light. Robinson then proceeded to the chartroom and identified the target at 15,700 yards from the *Cuyahoga*. The small radar return however obscured the target's true size and to his mind, confirmed Robinson's initial assessment—a fishing boat on a northerly course which the *Cuyahoga* was overtaking.

Much has been written in the field of accident investigation regarding Robinson's misperception. The long and the short of this body of work is that once an actor makes an initial determination—a fishing boat on a parallel course—all subsequent information presented to the actor will be processed consistent with the initial misperception.

What Robinson was actually viewing was the Argentinean Bulk Freighter *Santa Cruz II* fully loaded with 19,000 tons of coal en route from Baltimore to San Nicolas, Argentina.



The *Santa Cruz II* was only a year old with a crew of 37. She was the pride of the Argentine Government's ELM Line and was making 14 knots on

a southern course. At the helm were Baltimore Pilot John Hamill and Captain Arbelado Albonoz. Both had visual and radar contact with the *Cuyahoga* and both believed a routine port-to-port passing was in the works.

At his court martial, Robinson testified he never recognized his initial misidentification of the *Santa Clara II* as a small fishing vessel or, that she was outbound from Baltimore. Believing his vessel and the fishing boat were on parallel northern courses, Robinson began the turn into the Potomac and ordered the *Cuyahoga* to port.

Hamill immediately recognized that the *Cuyahoga's* course change made collision a real possibility. Now 2000 yards apart, Hamill sounded one blast indicating the Argentinean bulk carrier would maintain course and for *Cuyahoga* to give way. Robinson, still traveling under the misapprehension he was turning astern of a fishing vessel, ordered a whistle of acknowledgment. Neither vessel ever attempted radio contact with the other's bridge. Now it was too late.

When the *Santa Clara II* sounded her horn a second time, there could be no further mistaking it for a fishing boat. Robinson ordered full stop and followed by full reverse. Hamill simultaneously ordered full stop and in attempting to avoid the collision, which was now eminent, ordered hard-a-port. At 9:07, the ram-like underbow of the *Santa Clara II* gored the *Cuyahoga* starboard midship and rolled the cutter fifty degrees. *Cuyahoga's* starboard side was now hung up on the *Santa Clara's* bow while its port rail was in the water. Within two minutes, the *Cuyahoga* sank. Her survivors were those members of the crew that were above deck when she was struck. When the survivors were taken aboard the *Santa Clara II*, which lay at anchor several hundred yards from the wreck, it was then that her surviving crew realized eleven hands had been lost.



The Coast Guard's Atlantic Strike Team, which was primarily responsible for oil spill response, reached the site within hours. As always, there was a belief that some of the missing crew members could still be alive on the bottom of the Bay in air pockets and dive operations commenced. When it discovered that the buoy placed by the *Santa Clara II* to mark the scene had drifted, a fishing boat – the *Bay King* – responded to the Strike Team's request for assistance. From there the team found the telltale sign of oil drops rising to the surface. Within minutes the dive team located the *Cuyahoga* on her side with a fifteen foot gash in her hull. There were no survivors.

Nine days later, Navy cranes raised her and placed her on a barge and towed her to Baltimore where the General Services Administration refused to accept the wreck. She was stripped of her equipment, patched and towed to Virginia where the Virginia National Resources Administration requested she be sunk for a second time as an artificial reef. Thirteen months after being struck by the *Santa Clara II*, she was scuttled off the Virginia Capes. Several months later, Robinson was court martialled. The Coast Guard's Marine Casualty Report found:

The proximate cause of the casualty was that the commanding officer of the *USCG CUYAHOGA* failed to properly identify the navigation lights displayed by the *M/V SANTA CRUZ II*. As a result, he did not comprehend that the vessels were in a meeting situation, and altered the *CUYAHOGA's* course to port taking his vessel into the path of the *SANTA CRUZ II*.

Marine Casualty Report USCG 16732/92368 (31 July 1979).



General Information:

Gangplank Marina

- **Phone #:** 202.554.5000
- **FAX #:** 202.554.2740
- **24-Hour Security Cell Phone:** 202.345.0663
- **Email Addresses:**
 - General Inquiries: GPDockOffice@comcast.net
 - Marina Manager J Nickerson: GPMain@comcast.net
 - Dock Master Deana Volker and Office Manager Sandie Glasgow: GPDockOffice@comcast.net
 - Assistant Dock Master Dianne Hartenstine: GangplankMarina@comcast.net
- **Website:** www.gangplank.com
- **Business Office Hours:** Monday thru Friday, 8:30 am to 5 pm / Saturday & Sunday, 9 am to 4 pm
- **Latitude & Longitude:** N 38°52.600' / W 077°01.334'



Other Important Phone Numbers

- **DC Metro PD Harbor Patrol:** 202.727.4582
- **DC Fire Boat:** 202.673.3200
- **USCG (Baltimore):** 410.576.2525