



RENAMING YOUR NEW-OLD BOAT

Here are seven ways to avoid the wrath of the gods, according to **Bernie Weiss**

Since the beginning of time—or, at least, since before the days of iron men and wooden boats—sailors have sworn that there are unlucky ships, and that the unluckiest of them all are those whose names have been changed. This would lead you to believe then that renaming a preowned boat is never to be taken lightly.

IT'S A "LEGEND THING"

The principal god of the sea is Poseidon, as the ancient Greeks called

him, but is better known as Neptune, which is what the ancient Romans renamed him. Neptune néé Poseidon is said to live on the ocean floor in a palace made of coral and kelp, whence he assures safe passage over the seven seas by all who respect his protocols. Failure to do so inevitably incurs the wrath of Neptune provoking a series of events that are at once mysterious, unpredictable, and unfortunate. They range from prolonged stretches of foul weather and *mal de mer* to fires down below,

personal-injury "accidents," collisions at sea, and, of course, the sending of your vessel to Davy Jones's locker (or Neptune's palace).

Moreover, according to legend, data about every seagoing vessel is recorded by name in a waterproof ledger of the deep, a meticulous record maintained by Neptune himself. This record is said to be cross-indexed by hull number, VIN, documentation number, and state registration. Thus, Neptune is intimately acquainted with each and every seagoing vessel. To change a vessel's name is to blemish his records.

OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

Suppose you have acquired a boat—one you can afford because it needs some serious refit or cosmetic work well within the limits of your capabilities. This would, of course, be a preowned "project" boat. But what if the name that came with the

boat absolutely offends you and *must* be changed?

TO AVOID THE WRATH OF NEPTUNE, I RECOMMEND ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

1. Ask the previous owner of the boat to officially change the name before you assume ownership. By so doing, any subsequent punishment administered by Neptune will be suffered by the prior owner, not yourself.

2. If you already own the boat and its name must be changed, simply translate it into another language. For example, *Sea Witch* in English (a terrible name) sounds far more romantic when translated to French: *Sorcière de la Mer*.

3. Can the letters in the name be rearranged to create a more acceptable name? A friend in my yacht club changed *Mission Impossible* to *Ibis Nolo Pessimism*. Put your anagram skills to the test. In this case, the test results produced a mysterious, nonsensical legal phrase. But it

worked. In the four years since the name change, *Ibis Nolo Pessimism* has provided nothing but pleasure to its second owner.

4. Select a new name with the same general theme as the old. I noticed recently that the former *Floating*

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Alone, owned by a bachelor mortgage broker who lived aboard in a marina, has been renamed *Tee for Two* by its new owners, a golf pro and his mate.

5. Keep the old name, but augment it with a prefix or suffix. One of my friends acquired *Amy* and, not liking the name, added *Lee* to the end of it. Her new-old boat's old-new name is now *Amy Lee*.

6. Use only part of the old name, and respell it if necessary. In a local yacht yard I observed that a vintage wood

schooner named *Seriously, Dear* was undergoing a major refit and would soon emerge as *Sirius*. When a local lobsterman's *Mary M* was sold, the new owner kept only the hull and engine, and rebuilt the interior for recreational use. The new-old boat was renamed *Merriment*.

7. A boat previously named after the owner's spouse can be safely renamed after *your* spouse if she has a similar disposition and if the name is similarly styled. Thus, the new owner of *Saucy Sue* morphed her name into *Daring Daphne*.

Incidentally, I have never encountered a recreational vessel named after a male, although macho behavioral characteristics—*Bold, Adventurous, Intrepid*—are commonly observed on boats' transoms. In contrast, military and commercial vessels frequently honor men with their names.

So think creatively, change the name according to one of the above options. And most important, get on with your project. ■