



RENAMING YOUR BOAT

# How to Avoid the Wrath of the Sea Gods



***Because its transom didn't sport a name when they purchased it, the couple that bought this pre-owned boat won't have to worry about offending the sea gods when they hold a naming ceremony.***

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME, OR AT LEAST SINCE BEFORE THE DAYS OF IRON MEN AND WOODEN SHIPS, SAILORS HAVE SWORN THAT THERE ARE UNLUCKY VESSELS, AND THE UNLUCKIEST VESSELS OF ALL ARE THOSE WHOSE NEW OWNERS HAVE CHANGED THEIR FORMER NAMES. HERE'S THE BOTTOM LINE: RENAMING A PRE-OWNED BOAT IS NOT AN UNDERTAKING TO BE DONE LIGHTLY.

**It's** a "legend thing." The principal gods of the sea are Neptune, a Roman King of the Sea, and Poseidon, the Greek's Ruler of the Sea. Neptune and Poseidon are said to live on the ocean floor in palaces of coral and kelp. From these palaces, they assure safe passage over the Seven Seas to all who follow their doctrine and respect their protocols. Failure to do so inevitably incurs the wrath of Neptune or Poseidon (apparently, you get your choice), soon followed by a series of events that are mysterious, unpredictable, and unfortunate. The risks of consequent adverse events range from long bouts of foul weather and mal de mer, to fires down below, personal injury "accidents," collisions at sea, and of course, sinking to Davy Jones's locker (or Neptune's and Poseidon's palaces on the ocean floor).

Moreover, according to legend, Neptune and Poseidon record data about every seagoing vessel, by

name, in a meticulously-maintained Ledger of the Deep. This record is said to be cross-indexed by hull number, sail number, documentation number, and state registration. Thus, Neptune and Poseidon are intimately acquainted with each and every seagoing vessel. To change a vessel's name is to blemish the record. Because this is disrespectful to the sea gods, even an implied threat to change the name of a pre-owned boat usually convinces a new owner to retain the former name.

So let's say you have finally acquired a boat. What if the boat's name absolutely positively offends you and must be changed?

To avoid the wrath of the sea gods, there are several options. Ask the previous owner of the boat to change the name, officially, before you assume ownership. By so doing, any subsequent misfortune to be rendered by Poseidon and Neptune will accrue to

**BY BERNIE WEISS**



***Boat names are sometimes like vanity license plates on cars – what makes sense to the owner can be a mystery to everyone else.***

the prior owner, not yourself.

If you already own the boat, keep the name but translate it to a new language. For example, *Sea Witch*, sounds far more romantic when translated to the French *Sorcière D'Mer*.

Or you can rearrange the letters in the present name to create a new name that's more acceptable to you. A friend in my yacht club changed *Mission Impossible* to *Ibis Nolo Pes-*

*simism*. In other words, do the anagram. In this case, the results produced a mysterious phrase. But it worked. In the four years since the name was changed, *Ibis Nolo Pessimism* has yielded nothing but pleasure to its second owner.

Select a new name with the same general theme as the old. I noticed recently that the former *Floating Alone*, owned by a bachelor mort-

gage broker who lived aboard, has been renamed *Tee for Two* by its new owners, a golf pro and his mate.

You can always keep the old name, but augment it with a prefix or suffix. My friend Ann acquired *Amy* and appended *Lee* to get the new name of *Amy Lee*.

Or you can use part of the old name, re-spelling it if necessary. In a local yacht yard I observed that a vin-

tage wood schooner named *Seriously, Dear* was undergoing a major re-fit and would soon emerge as *Sirius*. A lobsterman's old *Mary M* was sold; the new owner kept only the hull and engine, re-building the interior as a mini-trawler for recreational use. The new-old boat was renamed *Merriment*.

A boat named after the previous 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 the boat's name to *Daring Daphne*.

Changing the name of a pre-owned boat might be chancy, but any of these options should prove acceptable to Neptune and Poseidon. 🐙



***On some boats, the "old name" is so unacceptable that renaming is a priority, even if it means risking the ire of the sea gods.***

1/2 HORIZONTAL

7" x 4 7/8"