

Merry Christmas,

Did you watch the Marco Island lighted boat parade last Saturday night? It was awesome. The turnout was a little better than anticipated and some of the boats were just fabulous.

I have both participated as a driver and viewed the parade as a spectator and honestly I can't say which one I enjoy the most. Admittedly the one time I participated was actually the Naples boat parade. It was an interesting experience to say the least.

My client had a medium sport fisherman that all the office girls decorated and I was tapped to drive. Well I show up on time to find a generator that is way underpowered for the bazillion lights they hung so off to the Home Depot for a rental. Once we got the generator issue worked out we loaded up and dashed out to the staging area just in time. About this time I realized just how thorough the girls were at decorating the boat. They had hung icicle lights across the hard top, put a big blow up snow man on the roof and positioned a spot light on the foredeck to light up the snow man. In a word I was blind as a bat. I couldn't see past the bow rail. Which wasn't all bad considering all the pretty girls dancing there. I wound up making a few light adjustments and fine-tuned the radar. I pretty much ran the whole parade on instruments and faith. Not the smartest or safest thing I have ever done, but we came out unscathed. Touch wood.

The past few years my parents have put on an open house at their Pavilion Club residence. They have a double unit on the second floor that provides a prime viewing vantage point. All of our friends come by and we eat and drink and the best part is that the parade comes by twice. The event has grown every year and has become somewhat of a tradition. I have friends that call in November asking when the big night is.

But as with most things the parade could stand improvement. I offer a contrast to the street parade. The street parade is heavily supported by local business yet the boat parade is woefully neglected by those same businesses. Why? The boat parade is easier, sort of, and certainly a lot of fun. As far as I know only Bronwin from Elkam Marine Services had a boat in this year's parade. She did a smashing job. Sea Swan was decorated to beat the band, especially the angel in the boson chair. It was by far the favorite entry of our little gathering. But where was everybody else?

In the street parade every year without fail Mr. Walker always does a bang up job towing a Pursuit or Formula and throwing candy. Thanks Jim we love it and appreciate the effort but how about lighting up that nice Davis next year? Mr. Lampert and Mr. Hopkins we missed your entries as well. And how many marching band members do you think we could put on the Kahuna? Is Wayne still here? Maybe just the drums and horns would be pretty neat. Charter boat row.... You're being called out. What better way to show off your platform? Calling captains Bill, Randy, Sean, Shaun, (not Keith unless he gets a muffler ☺) Teddy, Jody, Mike, Jimmy, Scott, Phil, Rich, Bubby and Joe C. How about it? Some of the local non-marine businesses have done well and have some pretty nice yachts parked out back of their homes. Mr. Prout and Mr. Christian come to mind. Your boats are absolutely gorgeous, hang a sign and some lights and have fun with it next year. I know of a nice 57 pilothouse that could hold three troops of Girl Scouts or the whole Rotary Club and still have room for the brokerage sign. Speaking of Brokerage, Mr. Howard, Mr. Lowe and Mr. Balsamo I am surprised you haven't taken recent advantage to show your wares. How about water sports? I think Dunstins' wake board boat would

dress up quite nicely and Mr. Bahr you might not want to put up a parasail but I'm sure with your staff you could figure out something fun.

50 boats or better. That is the goal. I have put a reminder in my Outlook for next November to call everyone listed here next year ask for their participation. Lets all get onboard and blow it out next year.

Merry Christmas every one and Happy New Year.

Correction from last week. The regulations I cited were from the CFR's and apply to Federal waters. While inshore Florida State law applies.