

Last night my whole family rode our bicycles to the store. When it came time to cross San Marco even Daddy stepped off his bike and walked it across the street. It's called: "practice what you preach".

Two weeks ago I climbed up on my ink and paper soap box and laid out a pretty tall task for my readership. The chore I recommended involved stripping your boat of all contents and giving her a good scrub, tightening the hose clamps, conducting an inventory and doing any little maintenance items one discovers during the process.

I realize that this is no small challenge and perhaps I should have made it clear that it can't be done in a single day unless your boat is a canoe.

Well I started feeling a little hypocritical about not actually having done it myself this year. My dear wife reaffirmed this little oversight and as usual she was right.

So Saturday evening I hauled the boat. On the way to the ramp I started thinking about how I wanted to raise the engine one hole, then I remembered that loose molding and the one inoperable courtesy light. Sure enough, I didn't even have the boat hauled yet and my list had grown into more work than I had anticipated. But that is what these bi-annual gut jobs are all about.

By nightfall Saturday the boat was home, the engine raised and the boat half stripped of gear. Sunday I started at about 1:00 pm and finished stripping the boat and then spent about 2 hours fixing and tightening stuff before scrubbing storage lockers. By nightfall all the lockers, decks, holds, console and bilges were clean.

As I write this on Monday Morning I can look out a window and see boat stuff and tackle piled in the driveway. The outside of the boat needs cleaning and whole thing really deserves a polish and wax. No small task and still not finished. Just think I run a 20' single engine open boat. Boy am I glad I sold the 32 footer! Sorry about that if you're still working too.

But you know, it feels great. The boat looks great, all of the little rattles are gone and the bilges are gleaming. It feels a little like clean sheets after a hot shower.

Thanks for reading my column every week. People I see around town have commented on it and provided some great suggestions and few critiques. However, I have gotten very few email questions or comments. You have a marine surveyor at your disposal free of charge so ask him a question.