

## *Loose Shi\_s Sink Shi\_s*

For the past four years C-SAW has been working to stop cruise ship pollution through legislation, regulation, education, outreach, and the support of direct action, helping communities from Alaska to Hawaii develop and implement strategies for protecting their local waters and marine resources.

A “typical” cruise ship (3000 passengers and crew) generates about 270,000 gallons of graywater, 30,000 gallons of sewage, 7,000 gallons of oily bilge water, 23 pounds of toxic waste, and 11.5 tons of garbage *every day*. Americans account for approximately 75% of the cruising public, and as tensions continue to rise around the world, an increasing number of “cruisers” are looking for “safe” vacations. As a result, cruise ship activity in the Western Hemisphere is booming. To meet the increasing demand for cruise vacations the industry is building a new, larger fleet of ships; each with the capacity to hold more people (up to 5000 passengers and crew) and generate more pollution than ever before. But cruising is not simply about fatty food, crowded casinos, lousy entertainment, sweatshop labor, and expensive drinks delivered in a herd-like atmosphere. It’s much, much more...

## *Say Bon Voyage to the Buffet Line*

The recent boom in passenger and crew numbers coupled to the tight quarters and sanitation problems on the new mega-ships is incubating communicable diseases at levels reaching epidemic proportions. In the past year, Princess, Holland America, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, Disney, Norwegian, and Celebrity have suffered significant on-board infestations of Norwalk-type viruses (intense stomach flue symptoms), and/or cases of Salmonella, Rubella, Shigella, Giardia, and E. coli. Cruises have been cancelled and passengers have been restricted to cabins. Despite highly publicized disease outbreaks and significant efforts by industry to improve disinfection, Princess Cruises recently cancelled a Los Angeles to Hawaii cruise after 13% of the passengers came down with gastroenteritis – a number that probably underestimates the total number of people infected because of the time necessary for incubation of the disease and the likelihood that many people did not report their illness to the ship’s infirmary. Crewmen on some ships have begun wearing surgical masks and latex gloves; passengers are offered disinfectant wipes before entering dining areas. The number of people in ports-of-call becoming ill as a result of contact with these passengers and crew is unknown.

The industry’s presence is growing at an infectious rate as well. The number of cruise passengers visiting Alaska is predicted to increase from 1.2 million in 2002 to 2 million by the year 2010. The international fleet accounted for 20 dockings in the Hawaiian Islands in 1998. In 2003, there will be 30 dockings in Honolulu alone and it is anticipated the industry will continue to grow in Hawai’i by 8% annually without the consent of local communities or the pre-visit planning required by Hawaiian law. At the request of concerned citizens from across the Islands, C-SAW traveled to Hawai’i in December to meet with legislators, editorial boards, and impacted communities. Public presentations and meetings were held on four islands, where information and strategies were discussed regarding the ongoing cruise invasion.

## *You Can Just Say No*

Holland America Lines (HAL) scheduled half a dozen visits to the island of Moloka'i beginning in December 2002, without bothering to talk to many people that live on Moloka'i. HAL's goal was to drop 1200 people onto Hawaii's least traveled island via the town of Kaunakakai, a small community with one public bathroom.

Two days before the first planned visit port-o-potties starting showing up along the town's streets, however, inadequate and unattractive bathroom facilities are the least of local concerns. Led by activists and community leaders such as Walter Ritte, Colette Machado, Julie Lopez, and Rich Zubaty, the people of Molokai raised many serious questions. For example:

- What impacts would there be to the coral reef from dropping and raising massive ship anchors?
- Would cruise ships damage Molokai's 1000 year-old "fishponds", being rebuilt to increase self-sufficiency and reinvigorate the practice of the island's traditional culture?
- What effect would the dumping of millions of gallons of inadequately treated sewage, oily bilge water, and other potentially toxic wastes have on the reef's fisheries resources and existing tourism economy?
- What are the public health ramifications of the air pollution from each ship, equivalent to the exhaust emissions from 12,000 automobiles?
- Would the island's small clinic and few physicians be able to cope with potential epidemics of virus-stricken passengers, crew, and residents?
- Would cruise visits help the local economy or lead to a proliferation of t-shirt and trinket shops offering low wages and trivialized art and craftwork?

Many residents of Moloka'i were so offended by the industry's decision to come without an invitation they decided to send an RSVP anyway. With network TV crews filming from the beach, a fleet of Native canoes, modern outriggers, and skiffs took to the water to meet the first approaching ship in late December 2002. Over 100 signs telling the cruise ship to go away were posted along roadways and in shop windows all over town. More than 200 people waited at the dock to "greet" the ship – wearing t-shirts that said in big, red, block letters: "No Cruise Ships on Moloka'i in 2002." The Holland America ship turned away five miles from shore due to "high winds." At the end of Round 1, the score was Moloka'i: 1; HAL: 0.

As the date of the second scheduled docking approached in January 2003, the people of Moloka'i prepared to battle for their island again. After the HAL ship lost time rescuing a few stranded boaters off the coast of California, the company announced five days in advance of their arrival they would make every docking in Hawaii – except Molokai. Moloka'i: 2; HAL: 0.

Mid-April was the next scheduled docking. Would Holland America return and risk more bad press? Would they have too much hubris to admit defeat and try to dock again? The answer came the week before the scheduled arrival. Carnival Cruises, the parent company of Holland America Lines, announced the cancellation of all dockings for the next two years. Moloka'i became the first major community to successfully stop the invasion of a foreign cruise line.

The Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund, on behalf of a citizen's group from the island of Moloka'i and with the help of expert testimony from C-SAW, continues to seek an injunction to block all future visits by the industry to Moloka'i until the legally mandated planning process is completed.

*Dilution is the Solution?*

Recent studies (paid for and drafted in part by the industry) claim the levels of fecal bacteria and other pollutants discharged are safe because receiving waters sufficiently dilute the millions of gallons of polluted wastewater. Of course, all bets are off if you're kayaking in waters recently used by a cruise ship as a "mixing zone," or if the fish you are frying happened to be near the ship when the discharge valves were opened. (See EIJ Spring 2003 for more on Mixing Zones.) Sewage isn't the only problem coming from the poop deck. Independent testing in Alaska in 2000 and 2001 demonstrated that cruise ship discharges also contain elevated levels of hydrocarbons, plastics, and metals in excess of Alaska's water quality standards.

A handful of the big ships have replaced their non-functional sewage treatment plants with new equipment – sometimes the new systems work and sometimes they don't. The crew of the Holland America ship *Ryndam*, equipped with the new Zenon advanced wastewater treatment system, is under Grand Jury investigation in Alaska for dumping ~ 40,000 gallons of untreated waste while docked in Juneau in the summer of 2002. (Ship representatives tried to claim the spill was only 250 gallons. The industry has earned a long list of felony convictions for purposefully dumping polluted wastewater and lying about it after the fact. See EIJ XXXXX for more info on past violations.) Meanwhile, five months after the fact, the *Crystal Harmony* confessed in February 2003 to dumping thousands of gallons of wastewater into the Monterey Marine Sanctuary, despite promising the community and local City Council that they would follow a zero-discharge policy.

Even more disturbing, the industry has been actively touting the efficiency of their new, improved wastewater treatment systems far and wide, yet has suspiciously decided to not install the new equipment on any ships now under construction. C-SAW anticipates that with the release of the recent industry-supported mixing zone/dilution studies, the more efficient treatment systems will be declared unnecessary.

### *Existing Rules are Still Inadequate*

Alaska has the best anti-pollution cruise ship regulations in the world, although loopholes large enough to drive a cruise ship through remain. The industry continues to send its most modern ships to the Last Frontier, but \_ of the fleet holds its waste while close to land and dumps the load overboard when they get 12 miles from shore, rather than install better treatment systems that can meet the new, stricter standards.

The industry continues to spend more money on public relations programs than on fixing problems. In 2001, the industry reported spending 770 million dollars on P.R. and advertising. It's impossible to track how much is spent buying our "public representatives." Hawai'i's former Governor signed a Memoranda of Understanding with the industry one week before the 2002 elections that allows these corporations, convicted of multiple felonies, to remain in total control of their own affairs. Aiding and abetting the industry's request for non-intervention, the MOU requires no monitoring, no testing, and no enforcement; accepting without verification that the cruise companies are good corporate citizens. In Alaska, newly elected Governor Murkowski recently appointed the Northwest Cruise Association's principal lobbyist of the past two years to head the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the State's environmental watchdog agency.

### *Potential Solutions to the Love Boat's Problems*

There are answers:

1. The industry's 30-year exemption from requiring discharge permits must be withdrawn. They need permits stipulating effluent limits on all pollutants from all wastestreams that forbid the use of mixing zones to avoid meeting water quality standards.
2. An independent observer needs to be on every ship, as we've had for over 20 years in the foreign fishing fleet, to monitor treatment systems and check log book entries.
3. Every ship should install transponders on all wastestream ports to allow the Coast Guard and state agencies to monitor discharge events, locations, and volumes in real-time.
4. The federal government needs to establish "best available technologies" and "new source performance standards" to raise the bar for the industry as better treatment and pollution control methods are developed.
5. The industry should pay its fair share of income taxes as well as port taxes sufficient to mitigate impacts on local communities, and stop paying 3<sup>rd</sup> world wages while charging 1<sup>st</sup> world prices.
6. There must be meaningful penalties and criminal liability for non-compliance with all applicable pollution laws and regulations.

C-SAW, with the help of Bluewater Network, is spearheading the passage of an initiative in Alaska to address many of these issues. The cruise industry's responsibilities must no longer end at the annual shareholder meeting. Every day more people are becoming aware of the industry's environmental, social, public health, and economic problems. Many cruise corporations are heavily in debt from aggressive shipbuilding and marketing programs in the 1990's – coupled to the weakening domestic and world economy, their own financial folly may bring the industry crashing onto the rocks. In the meantime, our public waters and marine resources must be protected.

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