

What's That Smell?

Some days the scent is there, other days it's non-existent. Just because you can't smell anything does not mean there are no surprises in the water or along the shoreline. Unfortunately, we're talking human feces and we're talking South Maui waters.

They bob in from supposedly 3 miles out, slowly making their way towards kayakers and snorkellers alike. Some know to look out for the ugly surprises, as they've seen or bumped into them before. Others just see what they think are leaves, not knowing that some of the brown blobs are actually untreated bowel droppings.

Where are all the feces coming from? Look yonder and you'll see boats out on the water, over by Molokini, or returning to Maalaea Harbor. Just think, thousands of people use those boats, mostly in the morning, probably earlier than their bowel is used to awakening. And when ya gotta go, ya gotta go. But upon returning to the harbor, the boat has no place to pump out that heavily used head. There are no pumping facilities at Maalaea Harbor. All of the tourists de-boat, return to the Grand Waelea or Four Seasons or Prince Hotel and swim in their own droppings. How long will it be before they realize the nasty truth?

A recent letter writer to the Maui News reported seeing a "300-400 yard streak of what was undoubtedly gray water headed toward the shore". It doesn't warm the heart to know these droppings actually received treatment and that this poop has been macerated and treated with biodegradable chemicals. At least that's how the bigger boat companies, like Pride of Maui, deal with their head situation.

Scott Turner, Director of Pride of Maui, has a "deep respect for the ocean and its animals". Scott portends that he "always follows proper procedures" when performing

his necessary pump and dump, and always does so in 6000+ feet of water. He too feels frustrated with the lack of facilities at Maalaea and wishes there was a pump out facility located at the harbor. He states the Pacific Whale Foundation attempted to use a mobile pumping facility but that the people living in the condos at the harbor complained due to the foul smell emitted from the trucks and its necessary equipment.

Maalaea Harbor is probably the largest income-providing harbor in all of the Hawaiian Islands. And yes, thousands use the harbor daily. Somebody is making money from all of these people. Why is none of it being put to use to clean up our waters?

By law, the boats are allowed to pump their head if they are more than '3miles offshore'. Does this law mean 3 miles from our public beaches shoreline, 3 miles from the Maui County shoreline placing it beyond Kooholawe for south shores, or is it 3 miles from territorial borders?

One man, Dennis Fitzpatrick of Makawao, has been waging his own personal battle with this issue. For the past six years he's been bounced around from the Mayor's office, the Coast Guard, the DLNR, the Clean Water Branch of the Dept. of Health and even the state attorney general's office. Although many he contacts feel sympathetic with his cause, nothing gets done as it takes money. In the end, Dennis says, "everybody puts their heads in the sand as nobody wants to pay for it".

Fitzpatrick has done enough research on this to know "that in Honolulu, the state has pump facilities and that other small-boat harbors require boats to contract a sewage pump truck to handle sewage, logs are kept and rules strictly enforced to meet City and County of Honolulu requirements to ensure clean waters."

If you too feel offended by this atrocity, contact Dennis Fitzpatrick at 572-6565. Prior to performing any civil acts of disobedience, like picketing the hotels or harbors, Dennis wants to first organize the public. He suggests writing letters to the mayor, the county council and the Maui News to help keep the issue in the forefront.

At any rate, something must be done, as it is only a matter of time before this information is found in Conde Naste Magazine and Maui will no longer be listed as the number one island destination.