

Smashing the Buoys

On the Fox River and Chain o' Lakes waterways of northern Illinois, officials annually face an expensive problem. Of the roughly 600 buoys on these waterways, not one is expected to last the entire season. Each year, the attrition rate for the lighted plastic buoys has been 125 percent.

What happens to them? Officials say the buoys are willfully smashed to pieces by vandals.

In so doing, boaters are only hurting themselves and others, of course. The buoys are there "to provide safety and direction for boaters," says writer Stephen Lee in the Chicago Tribune. "Some mark no-wake zones where powerboats must go at slower speeds. They delineate shallow areas where boating could be dangerous, and show the way to mouths of channels."

Smashing buoys may bring laughs, but it is an expensive hobby. An agency ordinance levies a \$1,000 fine on boaters convicted of maliciously vandalizing buoys.

Like vandals smashing buoys, many people take great delight in violating the laws established by city, state or federal governments -- laws created for the good of the publics inhabiting or visiting those jurisdictions. Some choose to operate their automobiles at excessive speeds, or drive while under the influence of intoxication or violate the rights of fellow citizens by breaking and entering homes. They run the risk of personal injury and fines, if caught. But they also harm -- or jeopardize -- others by their actions.

The same is true in the spiritual realm. God gave us His commandments for safekeeping, and for lives of peace and happiness. When we choose to run over them, the Bible calls our actions a spirit of lawlessness. That behavior may bring pleasure for a season, but we will pay a price for such recklessness. Count on it.

--Beecher Hunter