

AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB
For Boaters, By Boaters®



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Knowing essential knots can save a lot of time and your boat

At the District 25 Rendezvous we held a knot tying contest to allow participants to show their skill at tying some basic knots. The exercises was most informative as well as entertaining observing the creative ways folks create various knots.

In the America's Boating Course students are taught how to tie several knots such as the Cleat Hitch, the Bowline, a Figure-Eight, or Stopper-Knot, But what are knots? Here are a few definitions to help understand knots and lines.

- Line – a rope used on a boat,
- Bitter end – end attached to boat,
- Working end – end attached to “things”,
- Standing part – section between bitter end and working end,
- Knot –securing a line to an object, itself, or another line,
- Bend – type of knot to secure one line to another line, and
- Hitch – type of knot to secure a line to an object

In boating, rope becomes useful lines such as Mooring lines, Anchor lines, Sheet Lines and Halyards.

Lines are secured with knots and hitches, characterized as easy to tie, easy to untie and doesn't slip.

The Cleat Hitch Used to secure a line to a cleat, cleats are varied sizes & materials, and the cleat hitch

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Executive Officer's Report

By Lt/C Ricardo L. Mares, P



The subject is Safety and the Keyword is Preparation.

Have you ever been boarded by the US Coast Guard? In the years that Norm has been boating, Norm has been on boats that have been boarded four times by the Coast Guard. Once during a sea trial in the Alameda Estuary, twice in San Francisco Bay, and once in the San Juan Islands. In

each of those occurrences, it was not Norm's boat, and in most cases, the boat did not have a current vessel safety check.

If you are a boater in the United States, there is a good chance that you either have been boarded or will be boarded by a Coast Guard vessel at some point.

The Coast Guard is responsible for enforcing US maritime laws and interacting with both American and foreign boaters. Coast Guardsmen perform boardings of both recreational and commercial vessels. Additionally, local law enforcement such as the county sheriff will perform boardings of recreational craft.

You may ask yourself, why does the Coast Guard want to board my vessel?

The main reason for boardings is to promote safety at sea. Coast Guardsmen would rather educate and ensure boaters have appropriate equipment on board than have to be called out to perform a search and rescue operation. Typically, the county sheriff will ask to board your vessel as they may have observed some unsafe activity such as an overloaded vessel, underaged children not wearing life jackets, drinking, or operating the boat in an unsafe manner such as riding on the gunnel or on the bow of your boat.

Should you be boarded, you need to have all your paperwork, safety equipment, and required placards in place. If you are found to be missing a required item, then you'll typically be given an opportunity to fix the violation or be issued a citation.

When the Coast Guard vessel approaches, they may ask you, the skipper, for permission to board. Unlike the police, the Coast Guard does not need your permission, reasonable suspicion, or probable cause in order to conduct a stop. When Coast Guardsmen ask "permission" to board, they are just being polite. Should the Coast Guard approach your boat, they may hail you via marine radio, use their lights and approach your vessel,

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Administrative Officer's Report

By Lt/C Alan Smith, P



For those that know me, my work assignments had me traveling to some interesting places. Of all the places my job had sent me to, only one trip was on the water.

This water location, I guess I would call a high security area. This location had an active submarine net that was patrolled by armed security boats on both sides of the submarine net. Needless to say the docks, warehouses, and buildings were also patrolled by armed foot patrols. Also there were underwater sensors protecting the area. The good thing about all this human activity is that it generally kept the alligators away. I say generally about the alligators being kept away because sometimes you would see a large alligator floating quietly alongside the dock. Outside the security area, signs were posted along the shoreline to keep people and pets out of the water. Luckily it was winter season so the mosquitos were not as bad as the summer season.

Even though I've been boating with the Power Squadrons for many years and taken many of the courses, according to the people in charge I still needed someone to operate the boat I needed to take me to where I needed to go.

My professional boat handler or captain to run a 24-foot skiff with twin outboard engines looked to be 19 or 20 years old. The kid as I would call him looked pretty green around the ears. Then again, this kid was the person in charge of getting me to where I had to go on the water. I assumed his local knowledge of the waters would come in handy to complete my assignment.

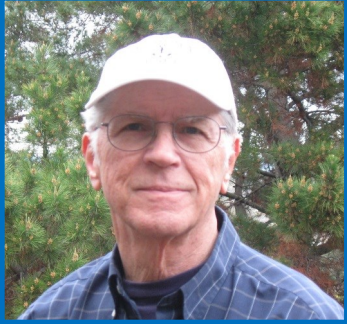
After loading my equipment into the boat the two of us were finally heading out from the dock. Arriving at the submarine net, it takes a while to have security retract the submarine net. Eventually we were on our way to open waters. The kid said to me in a nervous voice that he had not gone out as far as he was taking me before. At that point I started to pay more attention to this kid and became more aware of the area.

Maneuvering to where I needed to go the kid said to me that these boats don't handle well. I watched the kid struggle to get me to my location.

Administrative Officer's Report Continued on Page 4

Squadron Educational Officer's Report

D/Lt/C NORM PENNINGTON, SN-ON



. **Electricity** around boats can be very dangerous that can result in electrocution and fires.

In the years shortly before retirement and after, I have been involved in helping others with their boat electrical problems. Many of the boats were actually live aboard vessels. These have been a variety of small house boats, sail boats and power boats. Several were pleasure boats not intended for living aboard.

My first encounter was a member who wired in a small battery charger using household cable. This boat was an express cruiser that when used, was often travelling in speeds in excess of 25-knots. The cable in this case was a standard three-conductor solid strand 14-gauge Romex cable. Electrically, this cable will work in a 15-Amp circuit in a typical home, however being a solid strand cable, it is more likely to fail due to continued vibration causing the cable to eventually break. Often, before the cable were to break, it will eventually fail due to corrosion that is prevalent in the harsh marine environment.

In the past, some boat builders have cut corners using automotive grade electrical wiring in place of marine grade wiring. Automotive grade wiring is better than house-

hold wiring, however is still not suitable in a marine environment primarily due to the larger size cable strands that are more likely to break due to vibration, and that are not tinned, resulting in corrosion. Wire that is tinned is far more flexible and withstands the typical corrosive marine environment. If you are planning on purchasing an older boat, make sure that it has a metal certificate near the helm that the boat was built in accordance of National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) under American Boats & Yacht Council (ABYC) standards.

I have witnessed some real nightmare wiring on boats over the years, especially those that were used as liveaboard. Again, improper wires or cables, overloaded circuits due to too many space heaters in use with electric water heaters. Electrical outlets that are not marine grade are also subject to corrosion or overheating. Another problem are improper extension cords that can cause a ground fault breaker to trip on the boat, the breaker on the dock or in the main electrical panel in the marina. All boats should have a reverse polarity indicator at the main electrical panel that should be checked whenever connecting to a new shore connection. I once connected to another boat that had a generator with an outlet where the hot wire was connected to the neutral and the neutral was connected to the hot connection. This results in a very dangerous situation where electrocution was possible.

The *Marine Electrical Systems* course is presented in seven chapters that start with an explanation of what electricity is, followed by discussions on boat electrical wiring, DC and AC electrical systems, galvanic and stray current corrosion, lightning protection, and ends with troubleshooting of boat electri-

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Administrative Officer’s Report from Page 2

After completing my assignment on the water we started heading back to the dock. While still on the open water I said to the kid that if he was interested, I would be glad to show him a few tricks to make the boat maneuver much better. The kid was very interested in my offer.

I showed the kid how to manipulate the dual throttles and their effect on the boat. The kid was surprised that the boat could make a turn while holding the rudder straight and working the two throttles. Eventually we arrived back at the submarine net. While waiting for the submarine net to retract I showed what happens when one throttle is shifted forward and the other in reverse. The boat spun like a top. Reversing the two throttles, the boat spun in the other direction. The kid was really impressed how maneuverable the boat really was. Once inside the submarine net we did a few more maneuvers then finally arrived at the dock.

As we approached the dock there were four heavily armed guards with automatic weapons waiting for us. One guard barked out, “What the hell do you think you are doing”? The kid said I was teaching him how to handle the boat better. For me I thought it wise to remain quiet. The guards looked at each other then walked away. I’m guessing that security was observing us the whole time we deviated from the normal planned activity.

Unfortunately that I don’t have any interesting photos of this area. Then again, no cameras were allowed.

I guess the moral of this story is to teach boating lessons in a less restricted area. For me it was just another day on the job.

California Boater Card

Did you know that the California Boater Card (CBC), is required for every boat operator 45-years and younger? However, starting in January 2023 the age will be increased to 50-years and younger. Additionally, every boat operator regardless of age supervising a child 12 to 15-years of age must have the CBC. You ask, who is checking if one has a CBC? I’m told that state and local authorities such as the county sheriff is checking when stopping a boat for safety compliance. The Coast Guard may or may not check as they are more concerned with compliance with Coast Guard regulations. One way to qualify for a CBC is to have taken the America’s Boating Course after January 2018. As your squadron educational officer I am prepared to present the America’s Boating Course to members at a very small cost to cover mailing of materials. Presentation of the course will be via Free Conference Call, so members will not need to travel to the classroom. Drop Norm a line if you are interested. Remember, the first offence for not having the California Boater Card is a \$100 fine.

Essential Knots from Page 1

releases easily under load. The Bowline creates a loop in line. The loop won’t close or slip, and is used for securing to piling, another line, around your waist. Additional useful knots include the figure eight, sheet bend, clove hitch, round hitch & two half hitches, anchor bend – buntline hitch, rolling hitch, reef knot

While aboard my boat, I routinely use the cleat hitch on the dock cleat while the eye-splice on the other end (the bitter end) is attached to cleats on my boat. While underway, I bring the standing part back to the cockpit and attach it with a round-turn and two half hitches to a rail for easy access when docking. On those occasions, I am prepared to use a mid-ship cleat for a spring line to a mid-cleat on the dock. I have also used a figure-eight knot to hold onto an above the water line thru-hull fitting while attaching it to hull of my boat. Lastly, remembering how to tie a bowline is useful when making an eye in the end of a line to tie up to a piling.

We routinely practice these and other knots in the America’s Boating Course as well as the Boat Handling Course (formerly known as Seamanship). I also stress to my students to learn these basic knots and be able to tie them in the dark, as one never knows when they have to tie up a boat well past sunset.

What is ahead on the Calendar:

- September** **Rules of the Road, Anchoring, and Emergencies onboard seminars**
- Sept 19** **Executive Committee Meeting**
All members welcome via Zoom
- October** **The Mariner’s Compass seminar**
- Oct 10** **District 25 Council and Fall Conference**
- November** **America’s Boating Course**
- Nov 14** **Executive Committee Meeting**
All members welcome via Zoom

Educational Officer's Report from Page 3

cal problems.

The course includes detailed instructions on how to use a multimeter, how to solder and crimp electrical wiring circuits, and how to read electrical wiring diagrams. This course can be used as a reference guide for anyone interested in properly maintaining their boat electrical system.

This course is written such that it is completed in nine two-hour sessions.

- Day 1 - Introduction, Chapter 1: Properties of Electricity
- Day 2 - Chapter 2: Boat Electrical Wiring Practices
- Day 3 - Chapter 3: Direct Current Power
- Day 4 - Chapter 4: Alternating Current Power
- Day 5 - Chapter 5: Galvanic and Stray Current Corrosion
- Day 6 - Chapter 6: Lightning Protection
- Day 7 - Chapter 7: Troubleshooting Part 1; on-the-boat optional
- Day 8 - Chapter 7: Troubleshooting Part 2
- Day 9 - Review and Examination

There are three other courses in the marine electronics series that you might find interesting and informative.

Marine Communication Systems is an in-depth, nine chapter review of those systems available to the recreational boater, or to those with whom he/she shares the water. Radio history and spectrum definitions are presented along with definitions of radio circuits that the student should learn, to choose the best communications method for his/her situation.

Electronic Navigation introduces GPS technology from the most basic receiver to chart plotter systems for navigation on board. The process of navigating by establishing waypoints and routes, and then running the planned courses, is demon-

strated. Further, electronic charting software for the desktop computer is examined, with creation of waypoints and routes on the desktop and subsequent download to the on-board unit.

The **Radar for Boaters** course is up to date for radar technologies available now and into the near future. The course covers the different types of radar equipment, their capabilities and limitations, as well as their features and how they apply to students' needs. It covers what you need to know about radar, from how and where to mount the antenna to how to interpret the displays, so you can use your radar for collision avoidance and for navigational purposes.

There are also a few seminars that offer topical information in the marine electronics domain that can be completed in two-hours, and can be completed at a little to no cost depending if the student desires credit for certification.

- AIS Electronics for Boaters
- Marine Radar (short version of the Marine Radar for Boaters course)
- Using GPS
- Using VHF & VHF/DSC Marine Radio

Until next time and beyond, stay safe on the water.



Executive Officer's Report (continued)

or use a loud speaker signifying their intentions. If possible, find a safe location to heave to. Determine what side they'd like to tie alongside, place fenders on the appropriate side, and remember to wear your life vest when placing fenders. Coast Guard boarding parties consist of an average of three or more people, depending on the size of your boat. One or more Coast Guardsmen will stay aboard the Coast Guard vessel.

The average boarding will take approximately 15-30 minutes. One member of the boarding party will usually stay with you and start asking you a series of questions while the others will inspect your boat. Before beginning the inspection, you will usually be asked if you have weapons on board. Simply respond with a "yes" or "no" and indicate where any weapons are located. Advising the Coast Guardsmen that there is a weapon aboard and its location ensures everyone's safety.

During the inspection, the Coast Guard boarding officer will be checking for compliance to the minimum safety equipment list, documentation or registration and renewal sticker, and oil disposal and pollution (MARPOL) placards.

Safety equipment that you can expect to be checked are Life jackets (ensuring there is an appropriate-sized one in working condition for each person aboard), Visual distress signals, such as flares, and their expiration dates, Sound-producing devices, such as whistles or air horns, Fire extinguishers, when required, and any other safety equipment required by law. Typically, the Coast Guardsmen will ask about the marine head and if and how it can be emptied while on the water. They are particularly interested in knowing that the marine head and/or holding tank cannot be accidentally emptied in protected waters.

What Type of Items Are Checked?

- Life Jackets
- Registration and numbering
- Navigation lights
- Ventilation
- Fire extinguishers
- Distress signals (flares, horn, etc.)
- Battery cover and connections
- A Clean bilge and Flame Arrester (if equipped)

All of these items are currently required by state and federal laws and, if missing or non-operating, can result in a citation if your vessel is inspected by the Coast Guard.

If a violation is found during a safety inspection, the Coast Guard will take action based on the severity of the violation.

A note about marine flares. If you do not intend to take your boat past the Golden Gate Bridge, then you are not required to carry marine flares. However, it is suggested that you carry one of the modern electronic or e-flares such as ACR ResQFlare, Sirius Signal for Life and others.



For serious infractions, this may result in declaring your vessel as unsafe. This means that you will need to immediately head to the closest port until the problem is corrected. Hopefully this is where you came from, else you will need to acquire some land-based transportation to get home.

If a smaller violation is found, you may be given a verbal or written warning or simply be educated on the spot. Coast Guardsmen may recommend items or actions that you can take to make your vessel safer.

If you follow the three-Ps, that is Preparation, Preparation and Preparation, your vessel should be ready for any visit from a Coast Guardsmen boarding inspection. The first step in preparation is to request a vessel safety check by Rick Erickson, Nick Pack or Norm Pennington, or go online through <https://www.safetyseal.net/>. Ensure you have all Minimum Required Safety Equipment along with your current registration and/or documentation and other paperwork. Vessels with a current VSC sticker may not be boarded, or usually have their boarding time cut down significantly. Lastly, Vessel Safety Check stickers are only good for the current calendar year.



What is the last P for Preparation, **get a vessel safety check today!**

Immediate Past Commander Passing the Spatula



Table games underway with conversation in the background



Tying a Cleat Hitch



Photos by Alan Smith

2022-23 Bridge

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Commander's Comments



District 25 Rendezvous 2022

Having just completed District 25 Rendezvous in Rio Vista some coming in on Thursday and ending the day for dinner at the Point.

It was a productive event for Peralta. After all the expenses were paid, We made \$ 621.50.

All things considered with the high price of fuel and Covid we still had around 35 members in attendance.

On Friday the team decorated the party site, decorations in our traditional Red, White and Blue with Anchors as the theme. Dinner was hamburgers and hot dogs, chips and drinks. Some escaped the heat by relaxing under the shade trees, and others enjoyed a new Dice game.

By Saturday people started arriving by either boat or car. In the afternoon they were enjoying the shade under the trees. Some entered in the water balloon toss and then honed their skills in knot tying, while others played games or socializing with old and new friends.

For Dinner the group enjoyed Ribs, Chicken, Corn on the Cob and salad topping off the menu with Apple Pie for dessert.

Prizes were then awarded for the Balloon Toss and Knot Tying. On Sunday we enjoyed a Potluck Breakfast.

I want to Thank all the team for doing a terrific job: Norm and Judy, Alan, Barbara, Mike and Janice, Rick and Vickie, and Mary, Melba was here in spirit. We missed you.

Hopefully soon, we can have more events for members to attend.

Looks like a good time was had by all.

Thank you for all your support,

Commander Nick Pack, JN

