

AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB

Golden Isles



The port hole

For Boaters, By Boaters™

A monthly publication of America's Boating Club Golden Isles

Upcoming Events

January

16 - Club social
19 - Boating Activities Planning Session

February

2-12 - USPS National Meeting
3 - ABC Class
17 - Bridge Run
18 - Liberty Ship Park cleanup
20 - Club social

March

8-9 - District 26 Spring Conference
19 - Club Social

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Commander's Message



CDR Jerry Lamb, P

Running Aground?

In 1967, the *Torrey Canyon*, a 120,000-ton tanker, ran aground on rocks off the southwest coast of England. There were safe passages to both the left and right of the rocks, but *Torrey Canyon* managed to run straight onto the rocks in broad daylight with good weather and unlimited visibility, causing an environmental disaster. Why? The investigation focused on fishing boats and nets causing track deviation, an unreliable fix (no GPS in those days), and steering switched off at a critical time. Indeed, those were the proximate

causes in the last ditch maneuvering to avoid disaster. But those were in the last few minutes before the crash. The real cause is much simpler and much more human. The captain, Pastrengo Rigiotti, had decided to pass to the left of the rocks in order to make the tide at his destination. He never deviated from that plan although tides and winds were forcing him off the planned track and the left entrance became unattainable.

Sound familiar? No? Substitute St. Simons Sound for the English Channel and you needing to get to the dock for an appointment. Focused on that, you might just cut a corner a little too closely around one of our many sandbars and suddenly, you are aground. Too sharp a focus on one thing and not seeing the bigger picture, or "selective attention," can be a dangerous thing.

That is true for organizations as well as people. Our Club has done well over the last few years by gaining new members, more creative ways to get students, and other things. We have had great socials (wine cruise anyone?), new cruise destinations, more students in ABC, and others. For the coming year, we are looking at new ways to develop different cruise plans, programs for women-in-boating and youth on-the-water programs.

That is all well and good but just keep-on-keeping-on might lead to running on the metaphorical rocks. Until recently, many of the same people had to hang on to their jobs to keep the Club alive. To avoid this happening again, we need to get more people, especially newer members, involved in the Club's activities to keep the Club getting better. For that reason, I have told the nominating committee that I will stand down after this year. I will still be involved as immediate Past Commander but a new way of looking at what we do could keep US afloat and prospering.

This is my last *Porthole* article as Commander since we are going to a quarterly format. I have enjoyed the last two-plus years and am grateful for your support and guidance. I look forward to seeing you on cruises, socials, and just on the water.

Thank you.

Executive Officer's Report



XO Cynthia Lamb, AP

A Few of My Favorite Things

So, I finally put all my Christmas decorations away. Please, no judging. I love Christmas and I have a lot of Christmas stuff. Not as much as the Lijois mind you, but plenty. Besides Christmas decorations, I also love Christmas music. I got my 4-year-old grandson, Charlie, hooked on a couple Christmas songs during our last trip up north. He really liked "Donde Esta Santa Claus" (the Augie Rios version is my favorite). On a recent FaceTime call, Charlie proudly told me that he got their (Amazon) Alexa to play "Donde Esta Santa Claus" all by himself. This is an accomplishment, as Alexa often has trouble understanding him.

One Christmas song that I'm on the fence with is "My Favorite Things" from The Sound of Music. Technically, it's not a Christmas song but it does show up on several Christmas albums. I heard it this past season and it got me thinking about some of my favorite things – especially those related to boating. Now, I'm not talking about really important things like the Garmin GPS, our depth sounder, and the bow thruster (I love all of those), but more the nice-to-haves. And the longer you boat, the more gadgets and other fun things you get.

So here are some of my favorite boating things:

- Night vision monocular: I bought this awesome thing from our Past Commander, Charles Wilsdorf. It works amazingly well in the lowest levels of light. If I were ever brave enough, or unfortunate enough, to end up boating in the dark, this thing would be a lifesaver.
- Dolphin Ears hydrophone: You have no idea what is going on below the surface of the local waters until you put these babies on and get a listen. There is so much activity and noise down there. My hydrophone has added a cool element to my nature tours.
- Monkey fist (aka a sailor's knot) for heaving line: This is something I probably will never need to use on the boat, but it is some good insurance if we ever need to get towed off a sand bar. The monkey fist provides the necessary weight to a line to allow it to be thrown quite a distance. I wrote about messenger lines and monkey fists last year. I read somewhere that monkey fists are illegal in California because they can be used as a weapon. What can't? You could fill a sock with rocks and have the same function. Guns, knives, stun guns/tasers, marijuana, etc. are legal in California, but not a nautical tool that's been around for hundreds of years.
- MaxQuall Professional Full-Duplex Two-Way Headset: This is probably one of Jerry's favorite things too. Vicky Jefferis calls it a "marriage saver." This comes in very handy when we're anchoring. When I am at the bow of the boat dealing with the anchor and Jerry is inside the cabin, it is almost impossible to communicate. I've tried yelling and using hand signals, but to no avail. This works way better. I also look kind of cool wearing it.
- Marine shore power Y-adapter: Now, this probably doesn't sound very exciting, but it is a very nice thing. Our boat needs power into 2 different receptacles for us to have both housekeeping type things like lights and outlets and to have HVAC. We bought this Y-adapter from our friend Barney (he was also the one who told us about it). It means we only have to run one power cord out to the shore power pole. So much easier and neater.

I also have some great tools that we can use to cook onboard the boat. These include my stainless-steel gas grill that mounts in a rod holder, my butane/propane single burner stove, and the cutest little Keurig you've ever seen.

All these things are cool, but it all takes space to store. So, if I keep buying/accumulating stuff, we're either going to have to tow something behind us to carry it all or we'll have to buy a bigger boat.

Happy and safe boating in 2024 to all of you!

Squadron Education Officer's Report



SEO Mike Moye, SN

Upcoming Courses

Our first ABC Class of 2024 is coming up on February 3. Please help us spread the word. Our other ABC dates are April 20 and October 12. We also hope to have a late spring/early summer Boat Handling class (we'll recruit students from the February and April ABC classes). There is also interest in the advanced course Offshore Navigation (JN). If you've ever had an interest in learning to use a sextant, this would be your opportunity.

You Have a Distress Button, but Have You Enabled It?

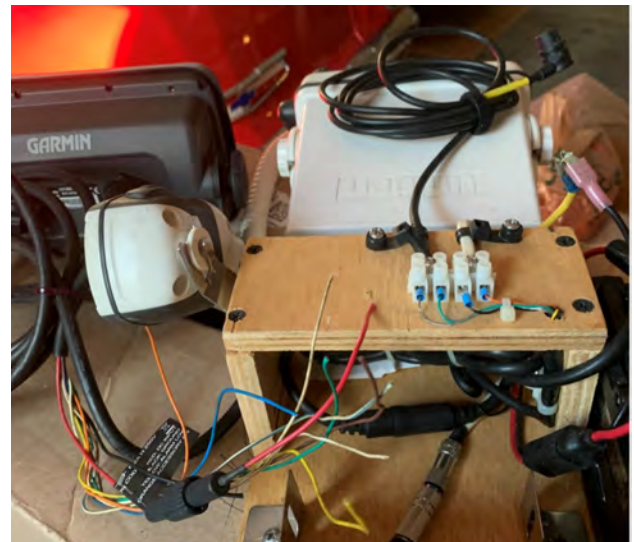
Before Christmas I suggested you gift your boat something special for the holiday. I mentioned Automatic Identification System (AIS) and went on to describe the kind that both receives and transmits vessel information and the kind that only receives. If you did any AIS shopping, you may have found that your budget could be very happy with a unit that just receives. However, to be really happy with it means you must connect it to your chartplotter or multi-functional display (MFD). The skill level for that process and the actual connections made are very similar to those required to connect a VHF radio to your GPS source (again, a chartplotter or MFD). You must make this connection to take advantage of all the VHF radio's Digital Selective Calling (DSC) capabilities (which include the **Distress Button**).

DSC uses VHF and GPS technology to transmit and receive location information. We use DSC in two major ways: Distress Calls and Position Reporting. A non-emergency DSC call (channel 70 on the radio) allows us to exchange and display positions of each other on an electronic map. An emergency distress call allows us to transmit a lot of information about our boat and where we are located without us saying a word. That call goes to everyone in VHF range—especially the Coast Guard.

To use DSC, you must register your radio and get a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI). You can get your number by going to our web site www.gisps.org. Scroll down on the opening page and you'll spot the link. Follow the directions and you'll be in business. Almost. You must program this information in your device. Plus, you still must connect the radio to the GPS source and for AIS, except for standalone units, you must connect it to a chart plotter. Both types of communication devices are great, but to make them work you have to twist some wires together!

Many of the newer devices on the market use proprietary cables that connect directly to devices of the same brand. They also have the ability to connect to a "backbone" which rapidly transmits data between units. Some devices can use older NMEA 0183 protocol which delivers data in a "serial" format not unlike early, early microcomputers used when connecting to a printer or modem. Those same devices can often also use NMEA 2000 protocol to deliver data in a manner not unlike Ethernet uses with a wired computer network. The plugs even look a lot like the Ethernet plugs that you use at home except they have special rubber covers to help protect from moisture.

If you have a boat that's a few years old, chances are that your chart plotter and radio have connections that terminate in a spaghetti looking bundle of wires like the ones of the no longer in service Garmin in the photo.



Continues on next page

Squadron Education Officer's Report (cont'd)

That unit is still a very functional device and using those tiny wires can easily be connected to the Uniden Oceanus VHF sitting next to it. Both of those devices rely on NMEA 0183 protocol to transmit data. Your radio and GPS are probably different brands than these, but they work in a similar fashion. Each of those tiny wires or pairs of wires has a different function which is described in the owner's manual for each device. The Uniden manual tells which wire color is data "out" and which color is data "in". The Garmin manual will give similar information for the wires exiting it. You connect the "data out" from one to "data in" on the other and so forth for the function you want. This simple connection will allow your radio to make DSC calls using the information from your MMSI registration and your location from your GPS. The same type of connection can be made between the AIS (that you bought your boat as a Christmas gift) and the Chart Plotter.



How you physically connect the wires is up to you. You can probably get by (for a while) with crimped barrel connectors but you'll still have a spaghetti mess of wires. The proper way to do it is with terminal strips. The terminals you see in the photos were used by Charles Wilsdorf to connect devices. He put together a couple of very good examples. One is a connection of an AIS to a Chart Plotter and the second is the connection of the Uniden VHS to a GPS source. Neat, secure, and made corrosion resistant with a little dielectric silicone grease.

So, there are different ways to connect our electronic marine devices (including wireless). The important thing is to make those connections so that when you need to make an emergency DSC call with your radio it can be completed quickly and without much thought. When you have an emergency, you don't need to worry about how to operate the radio—just press the red button.

Winter Cruise

We do live in a wonderful part of the world. Of course, we have seasonal weather but very often the weather forces give us those windows that allow boaters to get out on our

beautiful water. The picture of Admiral Sharon and her Deck Hand Enzo was taken a couple of days before Christmas as *Sharona, Too* explored the intracoastal for the last time in 2023.

Enjoy those pretty winter days. They're some of the best.

Safe Boating!

Mike



Administrative Officer's Report



AO Eileen Berta

Happy New Year! Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season with family and friends and are ready for another active boating year here in the Golden Isles.

Many thanks to Daria and John Lijoi for opening their beautiful SSI home to host our annual Christmas get together! The Christmas decorations were so very festive and the food and drink plentiful. And, as always, the wacky gift exchange did not disappoint. Who ended up with the fish??



For those who missed Frank that evening, he is doing much better and starting PT next week for rotator cuff and back strains. Needless to say, he won't be yanking the anchor out of the mud again anytime soon.

We're going to start 2024 with a social evening at the new downtown Brunswick Bubba Garcia's location on Tuesday, January 16. If you haven't tried it yet, it is a fun new location for this well-known SSI eatery with casual seating and great food. Bubba's is willing to set aside tables for us, but I will need to give them an idea of headcount by the day prior so they can do that, so I am going to have to ask for RSVPs again...

January Social

Date and Time: Tuesday, January 16, 6 pm

Place: Bubba Garcia's, 201 Gloucester Street, Brunswick (across from the library)

RSVP: by Monday, January 15 to Eileen at eileenberta@gmail.com

Be on the lookout soon for the scheduling of an informative "Operations Training" Zoom presentation by Past Commander Vicky Jefferis. This training should be attended by all new members and will also be a great refresher for everyone.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND SAVE THE DATE!

Change of Watch/Installation of 2024 Bridge

Dinner and Celebration

Saturday, April 13, 2024

Location TBD

Club Secretary's Report



Sec'y Sharon Hindery, AP

In the last newsletter, I talked about how our club members have historically been generous donors to the International Seafarer's Center (ISC) for the annual Christmas at Sea program. I know that several of you donated again this Christmas. Also, we raffled off a few wonderful items at the Christmas party and made \$130; this money and ditty bag items that some of you brought were then donated to the ISC.

We got a nice letter of thanks from the ISC director Peter. His signature with high art (it is him flying his kite). I am also attaching a picture with a couple happy recipients.



Christmas-at-Sea

December 28, 2023

Rick and Sharon Hindery
Golden Isles Sail and Power Squadron
142 Belle Point Pkwy
Brunswick, GA 31525-2173

Dear Rick and Sharon

RE: Christmas-at-Sea Donation

On behalf of the International Seafarers' Center, we would like to express our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Golden Isles Sail and Power Squadron for your generous donation of \$130.00 and miscellaneous gift bag items for our Christmas-at-Sea program.

Your donation greatly contributes to the life and spirit of the merchant mariners who visit our port especially during the Christmas season. Almost 1,300 Christmas-at-Sea ditty bags or boxes were distributed to seafarers last year and we hope to distribute even more gifts this season. It is always exciting to see the smiles and feel the excitement when we go aboard and hand out the gifts to the crew.

Again, thank you for all you do for our seafaring friends, especially during this special season.

Sincerely yours,

Thanks a lot!

Peter Boyton
Executive Director



Please join us for the February 17 Bridge Run (well, walk is more like it) at the Liberty Ship Park. It is a fundraiser for the Southeast Georgia Health System. We had a few gung ho folks walk it last year. It was fun. We can walk as a group, flying our burgees perhaps.

We will then meet up again the next day after the run, February 18 at 2 pm to do a litter pickup of the park post Fun Run. We do this every year.

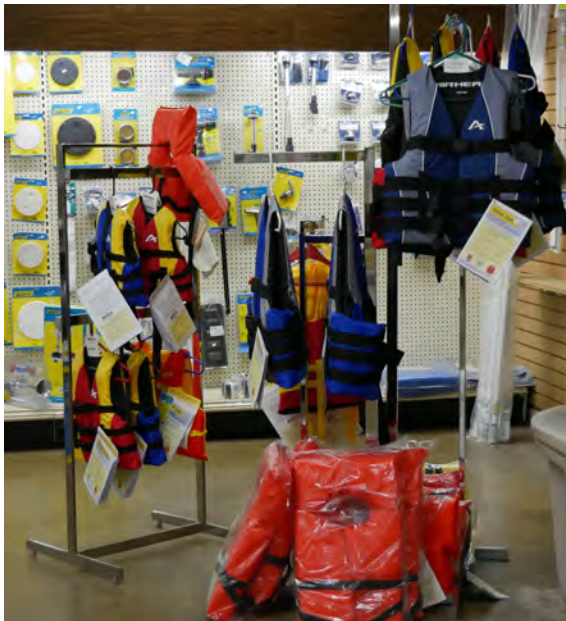
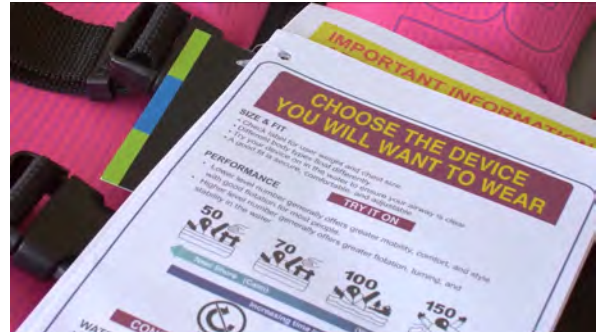
Let me know if you're interested in either of these events.

Thanks!



America's Boating Channel™ Understanding Life Jacket Labels

Let's start the year by getting our life jackets ready for the 2024 boating season. If you cleaned and inspected your life jackets before storing them for winter storage, you should know how many need to be replaced. Which brings us to our topic of life jacket labels. You may be unaware of the new labeling system if you have not purchased a life jacket recently. Type I, II, III and IV labeling was removed by the U.S. Coast Guard from the Code of Federal Regulations in 2014, but it is taking several years for the legacy designations to be phased out.



To help boaters understand the current labeling system, Season Four of America's Boating Channel offers the video "[Life Jacket Labels](#)" in which you are introduced to the simplified labels that contain less writing and more icons.

Regardless of your age or experience level, data shows that life jackets save lives. So don't hesitate to replace older life jackets. America's Boating Channel also produced a sequel entitled "[New Label Benefits](#)" that covers the advantages of the new life jacket labeling system. In this video, viewers learn how to interpret label icons. Also featured are tips for selecting the right life jacket for your intended on-the-water activity.

Follow the above links or visit <https://www.youtube.com/@AmericasBoatingChannel> to find these and other safe boating videos, which are an excellent tool to help recruit participants to our educational program and to membership. Invite your friends and neighbors to watch, like and subscribe to America's Boating Channel to introduce them to what our organization has to offer.

In addition to YouTube, these professionally produced high-definition safe boating and boater education videos are available via the [America's Boating Channel](#) free, on-demand app on Apple TV, Roku or FireTV. America's Boating Channel™ is produced by the United States Power Squadrons® (USPS) under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.



The first recorded patent for a cork life jacket was documented in 1765 by Dr. John Wilkinson of Norway. In 1852, during the boom of steamboats, the U.S. Congress first passed into law a requirement that the vessels carry floats or life preservers for every passenger.

Scenes from the Christmas Party & Yankee Swap



Photos: S. Hindery,
C. Lamb, J. Lamb

More fun photos...



The fish!



It's the sock monkey!



Spotted on the way home



That is not USCG-approved



America's Boating Club Golden Isles 2023 Bridge & Committee Contact Information

Commander	Jerry Lamb, P	860-908-4678	lambo50@icloud.com
Executive Officer	Cynthia Lamb, AP	860-908-5148	cynthia.l.lamb48@gmail.com
Administrative Officer	Eileen Berta	912-602-9500	eileenberta@gmail.com
Education Officer	Mike Moyer, SN	229-454-6791	mmoyer@surfsouth.com
Secretary	Sharon Hindery, AP	630-323-1206	sharona53@comcast.net
Treasurer	Teresa Wilsdorf, S	912-265-9550	tmwilsdorf@aol.com
Asst. Education Officer	Charles Wilsdorf, SN-ON	912-265-9550	chaswi30@gmail.com
Member at Large	Vicky Jefferis, JN	912-264-1352	vickyjefferis@bellsouth.net
Member at Large	David Jones	912-580-1041	david.earl.jones@gmail.com
Member at Large	Mark Crawford, AP	314-469-3252	mcrawford@sevenfourcapital.com
Member at Large	Rick Hindery, P	773-779-5653	rhhindery@comcast.net
Website & Publicity	Sharon Hindery, AP	630-323-1206	sharona53@comcast.net
VSC Coordinator	Ed Reynolds, S	423-341-2531	ejreynolds3@icloud.com
Porthole Editor	Cynthia Lamb, AP	860-908-5148	cynthia.l.lamb48@gmail.com

Happy Belated December Birthdays to

Sharon Hindery

David Campbell

Kay Miles

Shawn Cunniff



CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Please submit an article, picture, or even a link to a boating story or video that you feel other club members may enjoy. All newsletter content is due to Cynthia Lamb by the first Tuesday of each month.



The Porthole is the official publication of America's Boating Club® Golden Isles sponsored by the United States Power Squadrons®. The National website is www.americasboatingclub.org. Our Club website is www.gisps.org. You may also follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GISPS/>.



Our Club is part of the world's largest recreational boating organization with more than 20,000 members. We learn together, boat together, and help each other and other boaters on the water and on land.

Consider joining our Club to:

LEARN boating skills

ENGAGE with boating friends

CONNECT with the boating community

The only requirements for membership are a keen interest in boating-related activities and an eagerness to meet like-minded people whether power, or sail, or paddle boaters; however, **you don't need a boat to join**. Contact us through our website or Facebook page if you would like more information.