

# AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB

## Golden Isles



For Boaters, By Boaters™

A quarterly publication of America's Boating Club Golden Isles

### Upcoming Events

#### October

- 15 - Club Social
- 23 - Boat Handling
- 26 - District 26 Fall (Virtual) Conference

#### November

- TBD - Club Cruise

#### December

- 14 - Christmas Parade
- TBD - Club Christmas Party

### Inside this issue:

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## Commander's Message



CDR Mark Crawford, AP

### Let's Talk Merit Marks

A Merit Mark is a highly sought after award given to club members who go above and beyond to offer their time and talents to the Squadron. National's website says "It is the only official pay we get from contributions we make to USPS. Of all the awards conveyed by the organization, it is the most prestigious."

I have the great honor and responsibility as Commander to recommend to National the deserving members of our Squad for this honor. While the actual honor is a small certificate it does represent the most valuable contributions from our members. Once a member earns five Merit Marks, they have Senior Member status and once a member reaches 25, they are a life member and National dues are waived.

The process is quite formal. The Commander or his or her designee tracks members' activities throughout the year. All a member's contributions are then collected, and a short description of the activities are then written in the form of a recommendation and submitted to the area monitor for review. The activities are called "Valuable Service Performed." Once the area monitor approves the recommendation it is then sent to the National office for final approval and a Merit Mark is issued.

All Merit Mark recommendations are due by November 15 of each year. The cutoff date for activities included in the year is the end of September.

"Valuable service performed" can be many things. For example, community service of some kind in the Squads name would be included. Participating in the Boys and Girls Club cruise and picnic is a highlight from this year. Assisting with Women in Boating is another good example. Planning and assisting with social events are always a valuable contribution. Teaching or helping with our educational activities is a fantastic contribution. Performing boat safety checks is a much-needed service. Serving as a committee member on the EXCOM is always appreciated. There are many examples from our Squadron for this year. What is not included is merely participating in an activity. You must do some work. Even if you are the life of the party at a social that is not included.

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## Commander's Message (continued)

To be considered for a Merit Mark the member must have at least 12 hours of contribution to the Squadron. Last year our Squadron had 18 members receive a Merit Mark. It looks like we will have at least that many this year.

I hope understanding the process will excite and encourage our members to participate at a meaningful level. Offer your time and talent in an area that you find interesting and rewarding and get recognized for a valuable service performed. Broad participation by all the members makes the Squadron stronger and, in my opinion, much more fun. If you are interested in doing more for the club, just ask. There are lots of roles available.

As a reminder, ask your friends to join us at a social or a cruise. Ask them if they are interested in our education classes or community involvement. New members are the life blood of any organization.

Mark

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## SAVE THE DATE!

Our club will be entering a decorated boat (courtesy of Dave and Alice Vaughan) in the annual Brunswick Christmas parade. The parade will be held on December 14. The Christmas parade is a night-time parade, starting at 6 p.m. at MLK Blvd.



**If you're interested in helping, let Cynthia Lamb know @ 860-908-5148. Thanks!**

## Executive Officer's Report



XO Cynthia Lamb, JN

### Rick Hindery, Eco-Warrior

*Rick and I have different recollections of this incident, so I will give you both versions. You decide which one really happened.*

**THE STORY:** Jerry and I recently attended the United States Power Squadrons District 26 Cruise & Rendezvous in Savannah. It was put on by the Tybee Light boating club. We were joined that weekend by Rick and Sharon Hindery from our club. It was lots of fun, especially the boat ride and box lunch picnic on the south end of the Savannah River.

As many of you know, Rick and Sharon are anti-litter zealots. In fact, the Keep Golden Isles Beautiful organization has even named its volunteer of the year award after them. In addition, they often win their own award! I've seen Rick single-handedly go into a marsh and bring out objects bigger than himself when doing litter pickups.

When we were on the boat ride with the Hindery's up in Savannah, they found out that Savannah does not do any recycling. Oh no! Rick and Sharon do not think that is acceptable so they started collecting all the cans from our picnic on the Savannah River so they could bring them all the way back to Brunswick. They collect as many cans as they can fit in a plastic grocery bag that turned out to be a Harris Teeter bag.

When I ask Rick where he got the bag (we were on a boat ride remember), he says, "Sharon always carries an extra bag with her so that we have something to carry trash or recycling till it can be disposed of properly." As we're walking to my car (I drove us all to the marina), I notice that the bag is leaking. "No way are you bringing that in my car," I tell Rick. He says he'll keep it on his lap. As we get on the road back to the hotel, he puts his window down and says, "Or I can just hang my arm out like this. I wouldn't want your fancy car to get dirty."

**THE ENDING FROM MY PERSPECTIVE:** As soon as Rick hangs the bag out the window, the bag breaks and cans spill out on the road. Not only have we just littered, but a Tybee Island Police car is right behind us. I begin thinking about what I will say to the policeman and how best to throw Rick under the proverbial bus. Fortunately, the cop didn't even notice us. Phew! That was close.

**THE ENDING FROM RICK'S PERSPECTIVE:** As soon as I put the bag out the window, the bag breaks and some cans fall out. Not only have we just littered, but a Tybee Island Police car happened to be right behind us when it happened. For a few long minutes we sit silently at the side of the road as the officer runs the plates to check for prior criminal activity. Finding none, I guess; the policeman exits his vehicle and strides over to the driver's door - his hand on his Glock 17. "Lady, I've been following your Mercedes Benz since Thunderbolt and just saw someone in your car preparing to toss a plastic bag full of litter out the window. Care to explain?"

"I'm so sorry, officer", Cynthia says, "it was totally unintentional, more of a plastic bag malfunction, nothing deliberate. In fact, my friend here was collecting these cans so he could bring them back home for recycling."

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## Executive Officer's Report (cont'd)

I then chime in that yes; it was simply unforeseen accident. “Not dissimilar to the Janet Jackson, Justin Timberlake wardrobe malfunction at that Superbowl,” I say. “Just as they were exonerated for such an accident the same should be done here, I believe.” My rejoinder to the policeman was designed to defuse the situation but like so many beautiful plans it was destroyed by an ugly unforeseen fact.

When I introduce football into the analogy with my reference to that Superbowl, I found that I had inflamed the frustration of a Carolina Panther fan who had migrated to coastal Georgia. In what seemed like a heartbeat the patrolmen was now at my door. “Get out of the car!” The officer towered over me, inflamed I think not by the littering but by the fact that the Georgia Dawgs had trounced the Tar Heels in 17 of the last 20 games. “What’s an old guy like you doing picking up empty soda cans anyway? Don’t you have anything better to do?”

I gained my composure and said, "I'm a volunteer with the Keep Golden Isles Beautiful branch of Keep America Beautiful, and I recycle, sir! I like to think of myself as an *eco-warrior*." This seemed to confuse the officer for a moment, Keep America Beautiful was a term that filled any true American with pride and yet the Georgia/North Carolina football rivalry was acknowledged to be the Deep South's oldest rivalry.

The patrolman's mind told him that Rick was probably innocent, but perhaps his heart had gotten all stirred up by football and an historic love of states' rights.

Finally, the policeman got annoyed with us, so he said to be more careful with our trash and to have a nice day.



Shopping with the Hindery's on Tybee Island



Rick and some pirates at the Crab Shack on Tybee Island. Nice shorts!

**EPILOGUE: What do you think? Did this really happen, or did we make it all up? Whose version is the truth? Let me know . I'll collect your inputs, then reveal the results at a future club event.**

## Squadron Education Officer's Report



SEO Mike Moye, SN

### Upcoming Courses

Our Fall Boat Handling class is currently in progress and going well. We've all enjoyed some lively discussions about issues on boats and the different ways to handle currents, winds, and lines. This week we covered Emergencies on Board and will continue with various topics until October 28.

The next ABC class will be in February 2025. We'll announce the date in a later posting. Unfortunately, the October course had to be cancelled. If you find yourself talking with folks who are new to boating or just want to find out more about the many details we encounter when boating, please tell them about our ABC course.

Without question, the ABC course I took (way back in the last century) helped me with my boating knowledge quest more than any others. Basically, it gave me an awareness of the many things that I didn't know and had not experienced. Boat Handling was called Seamanship when I took it, and it helped a lot. Even though I didn't realize the extent of my knowledge gap, I knew that I needed a lot more than what ABC and Seamanship (Boat Handling) had provided. The knowledge I was searching for was in Marine Navigation and Advanced Marine Navigation.

Although we have not set a date, plans are being made to offer **Marine Navigation** in January/February. This is a natural follow-up to Boat Handling and is the first in the Navigation Series offered by America's Boating Club | United States Power Squadrons. The course covers navigation as it is done on the typical recreational boat plying the waters of the Golden Isles. It embraces GPS as a primary navigation tool but covers enough of the traditional techniques so that we can find our way even if the display we're using fails.

Here are the major topics:

- Charts and their interpretation
- Navigation aids and how they point to safe water
- Plotting courses
- Use of GPS—typical GPS displays and information they provide, setting up waypoints and routes and most importantly staying on a GPS route
- Pre-planning safe courses and entering them into the GPS
- Monitoring progress and determining position by both GPS and traditional techniques such as bearings and dead reckoning

It will be a great course, and we hope you'll consider it. There's another very interesting course coming up that should prove to be quite fun. It's called **Celestial Navigation**. Although it is the companion course to Offshore Navigation, there are no pre-requisites for Celestial Navigation. Also, there is no exam. The course is totally centered on the use of the sextant. You'll learn to take sightings of the sun, moon, stars, and planets to determine your location. To successfully complete the course, you'll turn in a "sight folder" containing your work with the sextant. To answer the question I hope you're considering—no, you don't have to buy a sextant. Our squadron owns a few and I'm sure we can borrow a couple more. Charles Wilsdorf will be the instructor and will announce a beginning date in early 2025.

In many ways fall is the most beautiful time to be on the water. Enjoy, but be safe.

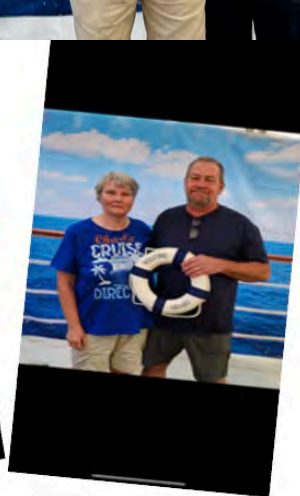
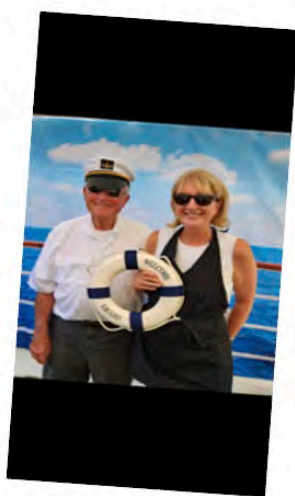
# Administrative Officer's Report



AO Daria Lijoi

In August we held our fabulous cruise-themed murder mystery event at our home. It was an intriguing night of interactions, full of laughter, twists and plenty of Mystery...Oh what fun had by all of the interesting characters...It was one we'll have to think of holding again in the future. It was truly a fun night aboard the "Mystery of the Seas." (See all the great photos below.)

In September we had a great time at Del Sur down in the Pier Village on St. Simons. Next up after that is dinner at Tramici's on St. Simons. Please text me at 845-527-5214 if you wish to attend. Our reservations will be at 6:30 pm.



## More Photos from the Murder Mystery Dinner



## The Tale of the Sam McGee

*An encounter with a sinking boat and how we were utterly unprepared*

Submitted by P/C Stephen Luta, JN and Ingrid Whiting



I'll spoil the ending now. The three adults and two children who were aboard are safe, but the boat sank. Let me set the scene. Ingrid and I live full time on the Sam McGee, a Pilgrim 40 trawler yacht, cruising the East Coast of the USA. On this occasion, we had cruised up the Potomac River to Washington DC with the intention of visiting various historical sites. Unfortunately, I'd done something very stupid.

Forty-five years ago, I gave up smoking cigars (smart), but while in Beaufort, NC recently I bought a few (stupid). They were delicious. While visiting our son in Virginia Beach, he took me to the commissary there and I bought a load. Over the next ten days enroute to our Alexandria, VA anchorage I consumed 37 cigars. My lungs strenuously objected though, resulting in severe inflammation and shallow breathing.

Because of my inability to walk the national capital, we decided after only five days at anchor to head south to Mount Vernon, the historical home of President George Washington. After two more days of rest and still not in shape for even a stroll, we proceeded south on August 17, 2024.

I was sound asleep on the settee while Ingrid piloted our 41-year-old Pilgrim trawler. Approximately 2 miles north of the US 301 bridge near the Upper Potomac Lighted Buoy UPI about a 30-foot power boat began closing on us with its crew waving frantically. Ingrid called me several times and finally shouted STEVE!!! I woke and came to the helm. As they approached, they shouted they were sinking. I told the five folks onboard (2 adult men, 1 adult woman and 2 children) to put on their PFDs.

Our VHF was on, but we hadn't heard a distress call, so I got on the radio and put out a mayday to the Coast Guard. This is when my cigar smoking really got the better of me. I could barely get our lat/lon position relayed over the radio because of all my wheezing and coughing.

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## The Tale of the Sam McGee (cont'd)

I left the helm and got to our stern, which is more a veranda than aft cockpit, and had Ingrid drop the fenders and told them I'd come along side and take them aboard. They requested that I tow them instead while they bailed with those orange Home Depot 5-gallon buckets. Even though I've towed boats in the past and have been towed by TowBoatU.S. myself, I did not have a premade bridle ready, and the situation didn't allow me the time to rig one. They passed over their bow line and I tied a bowline (knot) to one of our stern mooring lines. I told Ingrid to pay out the line slowly so it wouldn't get tangled in our prop. I returned to the helm. Coast Guard was now calling us. I responded to their request for my cell phone number. Again, I had trouble even getting the information out without coughing and wheezing. They called my cell, and I put them on speaker.

Ingrid was at the stern concerned that the boat in tow may damage our dingy which we were also towing. I called her up the helm station. I knew it was dangerous for her to be near the tow line, but rather than explaining, I told her I needed her near me.

The Coast Guard on the cell told me they sent me a text, and if I activated the text, they would get my exact position. I'd never heard of that in any boating class I'd ever taken or read that in any publication. They said over the phone they had dispatched a boat.

I was hailed on the radio by another trawler who was standing by off our stern. I acknowledged with difficulty because of my breathing problems. I informed both the guardsman on speaker phone and VHF

that the tow was under way, and it appeared the sinking boat was making headway on their bailing. Because of my terrible breathing issues, Ingrid said to the Coast Guard, "I think my husband is having a heart attack." They said they would dispatch a helicopter for me, but I told them NO! I just need to catch my breath. I have cardiovascular issues (my cardiologist jokes that I have more stents than heart), so I know what a heart attack feels like. This wasn't a heart attack.

Time to digress. A few years ago, I was helping a boating novice couple get a line to a mooring ball as they were having difficulty with opposing wind and current. The idiot at the helm put his boat in reverse and the line tore my left thumb off. They left me bleeding in my dinghy. I swore I'd never help a novice again. Well, guess what? Here we go again.



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## The Tale of the Sam McGee (cont'd)



Local fire and rescue were now on scene. I slowed as instructed and the boat I was towing quickly began to take on water and sank before the five people onboard could be transferred. The three adults never put on PFDs.

I had Ingrid bring me a sharp knife and I cut the tow line. No reason for Sam McGee to be pulled down. A second rescue boat came on scene and wanted to come along side and check me. I declined and we got under way. The Coast Guard thanked us and asked our destination. I said Leonardtown, MD but we ended up anchoring short of there in Breton Bay. The Guardsman called later to check up on me. I sent them photos we'd taken and our boating card and contact information. We never heard from those five people. I'm thinking they thank God we were there.

I did injure my arm in the rescue. Days later I had difficulty with my arm and fingers. But I'm working through it.

Here are some of the mistakes made and lessons learned that terrible day:

- I should have taken them aboard and not agreed to tow them.
- We had extra PFDs on board, but they were stored away in a locker. I should have offered them.
- Ingrid and I had PFDs at the helm station, but we failed to put them on.

I later called my insurance company to see what my policy covered. Damage to our boat was covered but not our personal liability. We'd offer assistance again; we'd just do it differently.

## Are We There Yet?

By P/C Jerry Lamb, P

How often did you ask that as a kid or cringe when you hear it as a parent? How you answered depended on many things, not just your mood (“Ask one more time and I’ll . . .”) but also whether you really knew how much longer, in real time not the agonizing slow time passing perception. If it was a familiar route, you knew about how much longer and could mollify the chorus from the back seat. If it wasn’t familiar, you unfolded (and could never refold) a paper map and plotted a route or went to AAA and got a TripTik with maps and directions.

Today things are simpler. You have a Maps app on your phone or navigation system in your car and you just put in your destination; the app calculates the fastest route and speaks directions as you drive (“Go through this light and turn right at the next stop sign”). It also tells you when you should get there based on the current traffic conditions. It even tells you the location of the nearest fast-food restaurant to feed the chirping mouths from the backseat.

We boaters spend a lot of time on the water, often just going to familiar spots for lunch or fishing; like going to Grandmother’s house, we know the way and the time it takes. But unlike the well-defined roads, or ruts, on the way to Granny’s, the waterways don’t have boundaries. Most of us have Multi-Function Devices (MFDs), a combined depth sounder, chart viewer, and speedometer on our boats. Useful for seeing where you are now but without directions to where you want to go. What’s a boater to do?

Never fear, technology will save you just as in your car. Programs and apps to help you plan the trip, show you when and where to turn (although it does not speak the directions), tell you how long it will take, and even plan your route for you. One of the most popular programs is OpenCPN, a free program for planning and executing routes on a laptop computer. You put a series of waypoints, sort of like planning on paper maps, between you and your destination and it generates a route. You can export the route in a format that your MFD recognizes. Transfer it, turn on your navigate function and voila, it shows you where you are, what course to steer, how long until the next turn, and when you’ll get there. You can even take your laptop and use OpenCPN to navigate the boat.

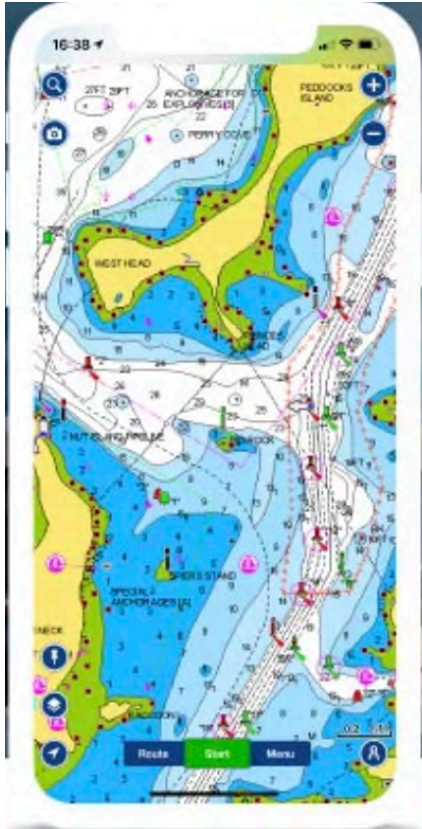
Too much work? There are apps that have routes that other people have used, most famously, Bob423’s tracks for the Intra-Coastal Waterway (ICW). Aquamaps (see right) is the best known of these apps and is often used on a tablet, such as an iPad. You open the app, activate a track, and drive your boat symbol on the screen along the track.

Much like a video game – but with real life.



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## Are We There Yet? (cont'd)



Still too much work? There are apps that will automatically generate a route between two places. You put in your boat speed, its draft (so they avoid too shallow water), its height above water (so you don't hit bridges) and the app calculates a route and displays it on the tablet. Again, you just drive your boat along the planned track with all the information shown on the screen. Navionics is the best known of these apps. (Photo on left.)

There's just one drawback. These are NOT video games. There are other boats, sandbars, crab pots, currents, etc. out there and no lines in the middle of the water to tell everybody to stay on their own side. As wonderful as these programs are, you need to keep your eyes scanning the water and sky for objects in your path and for weather.

You are responsible for your boat and crew. You need to check the routes for hazards before you set out and remember that you are responsible for being able to answer, "yes, we're there."



Last quarter's newsletter featured another great article by Charles Wilsdorf. This one was called "Peanuts and Autopilots." We submitted Charles' article to **BOATING** magazine for publication as part of their *I Learned About Boating From This* feature.

We learned last month that the magazine is going to use Charles' article in their Jan-Feb 2025 issue!

**Make sure to congratulate Charles. This is awesome!**

America's Boating Club Golden Isles 2024 Bridge & Committee Contact Information			
Commander	Mark Crawford, AP	314-469-3252	<a href="mailto:mccrawford@sevenfourcapital.com">mccrawford@sevenfourcapital.com</a>
Executive Officer	Cynthia Lamb, JN	860-908-5148	<a href="mailto:cynthia.l.lamb48@gmail.com">cynthia.l.lamb48@gmail.com</a>
Administrative Officer	Daria Lijoi	845-5275214	<a href="mailto:beachfun5@gmail.com">beachfun5@gmail.com</a>
Education Officer	Mike Moye, SN	229-454-6791	<a href="mailto:mmoye@surfsouth.com">mmoye@surfsouth.com</a>
Secretary	Alice Vaughan, S	217-841-6172	<a href="mailto:adv4495@gmail.com">adv4495@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Sharon Hindery, JN	630-323-1206	<a href="mailto:sharona53@comcast.net">sharona53@comcast.net</a>
Asst. Education Officer	Jerry Lamb, P	860-908-4678	<a href="mailto:lambo50@icloud.com">lambo50@icloud.com</a>
Member at Large	Vicky Jefferis, JN	912-264-1352	<a href="mailto:vickyjefferis@bellsouth.net">vickyjefferis@bellsouth.net</a>
Member at Large	David Jones	912-580-1041	<a href="mailto:david.earl.jones@gmail.com">david.earl.jones@gmail.com</a>
Member at Large	Jerry Lamb, P	860-908-4678	<a href="mailto:lambo50@icloud.com">lambo50@icloud.com</a>
Website & Publicity	Sharon Hindery, JN	630-323-1206	<a href="mailto:sharona53@comcast.net">sharona53@comcast.net</a>
VSC Coordinator	Ed Reynolds, S	423-341-2531	<a href="mailto:ejreynolds3@icloud.com">ejreynolds3@icloud.com</a>
Porthole Editor	Cynthia Lamb, JN	860-908-5148	<a href="mailto:cynthia.l.lamb48@gmail.com">cynthia.l.lamb48@gmail.com</a>

### 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. Please send all newsletter content to Cynthia Lamb.



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Our Club is part of the world's largest recreational boating organization with more than 17,000 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.