Volume 10, October 2023

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

October
- 17 - Club Social
- 21 - D26 Fall Conference
- 22 - Club Cruise

November
- 18 - Club Cruise

December
- TBD - Club Social

Inside this issue:

Commander's Message

CDR Jerry Lamb, P

BOATX?

Boat building essentially hasn't changed since the Phoenicians. Material and tools have improved, but you could give the tiller of a modern boat to an ancient and he could move it through the water to where he wanted to go. Engines instead of galley slaves would take some time to get used to; you push the throttle instead of throttling the malcontents. Amazed at the speed and smoothness of our fiberglass hull but not awed by the operation.

Because of these traditional ways, boats are expensive to own and maintain, putting them out of the reach of many families. (Yes, I know it's too crowded out there in some places, but Cynthia and I are often the only ones on the water.) Maybe it's time to reconsider the boat and especially its production. Boatbuilding is ripe for disruption. *What if Elon Musk built boats?*

I've been reading Walter Isaacson's biography of Elon Musk. A large part of his success with SpaceX, Tesla, Starlink and other endeavors, though not X (formerly known as Twitter), is due to the way he approaches projects. Musk's first rule is that only the laws of physics are absolute. To us boaters, that means that only Archimedes Principle applies. Period. Everything else is on the table. With that rule, Musk developed "The Algorithm" for building anything.

- "Question every requirement." That includes even the regulations about the product you're building. As a private company, SpaceX did not have to follow NASA or the Department of Defense's onerous regulations that defined the process of building and testing a rocket. SpaceX's contract with NASA was to conduct missions safely and for a price. We all know that SpaceX is routinely launching rockets to the space station and has even sent civilians into earth orbit. Boeing got a similar contract, for 40% more, to do the same thing. Using aerospace's traditional development approach, Boeing has not fulfilled one paying mission and is $1.4 billion in the hole.

  In the US, the Coast Guard and the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) specify rules for recreational boats. The Coast Guard requires the safety equipment, but does not publish any boatbuilding rules, that is up to the ABYC. The ABYC currently has 65 standards for various aspects of boat building. Presumably, the standards are intended to achieve some goal of safety or seaworthiness, else they are useless. Compliance is voluntary. That means if we want to build boats in the US, we can ignore the ABYC standards. Ignoring them might not be as risky as it sounds, creative new methods might achieve the desired results.

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Commander's Message (continued)

- "Delete Any Part or Process You Can." I once ordered a new sailboat and was able to watch much of the build process. Just the fiberglass layup process (circa 1941) was messy, tedious, open to errors, and obviously expensive. Replacing that process would greatly reduce the cost and time. I can imagine an electric boat with the batteries as the ballast for a sailboat (a sailboat because today's battery limitations are less important in an auxiliary engine), or a 3D-printed boat that is just as strong and seaworthy as current boats. Well maybe it's more than my imagination. The University of Maine printed a 25-foot, 5,000-pound patrol boat in 2019 and later built boats for the Marines. One startup is offering a 21-foot boat for sale, although they seem just to be graphic dreams. For $500 you can reserve your boat (https://tanaruz.boats). But one 3D boat, the MAMBO Boat built by Moi Composites, has been on the water (see photo). (Ed Note: MAMBO stands for Motor Additive Manufacturing Boat.)

- "Simplify and Optimize." I commuted to MIT on a train from Connecticut for a year. A law student compatriot on the ride owned a Hinckley 35, my dream boat at the time and the "sine qua non" of sailboats. One day she said they sold their (essentially) hand-built boat. Why? Because it was too costly to own. Any repair required ripping out expensive paneling or some other costly apparatus. Simplifying the design reduces both production AND repair costs. One target in my mind would be boat wiring; it is hand run and just a jumble of wires when I open the back of my console. The wiring diagrams help little because nothing is labeled. Simplifying the current wiring and replacing it with a prefabricated wiring harness built into the 3D hull might be an approach.

- "Accelerate Cycle Time." Make it faster, but only after you have finished the deleting and simplifying processes. Don't spend time fixing a process that you don't need. Modern boat builders are less concerned with cycle time than with better use of materials and technology to make boats better built than ever. But they don't seem to have looked hard at steps 2 and 3 above. They are making old procedures better but do not seem to be looking at ways to make them differently.

- "Automate." That works for most processes – but not always. The Tesla plant originally was highly automated as you would expect. But when problems came up, Musk discovered that some automated processes were not as efficient as those performed by humans and had to remove about one-third of all the robots to meet production schedules. Boat builders have used automation in many of their processes for higher precision building, e.g., for drilling the critical stern drive holes in the hull. But if you automate things that you don't need to do, or are too complicated than need be, you are just polishing the cannonballs.

Gee, that is interesting but so what? Beyond the fact that I think the moribund US boat industry will change dramatically over the next few decades, those rules can be used by all of us in having fun on the water. We all have our processes for getting underway, anchoring, and all the other evolutions for the boat. If we simplify some that can potentially speed up the function, making us less prone to error. I don't know about eliminating things, but I haven't looked yet. Look at your notebook with all the procedures (you do have one, don't you?), it might make for good winter ruminations and a better boating season.

Jerry

Executive Officer's Report

XO Cynthia Lamb, AP

Boating With MacGyver: Part I

I recently had the privilege of teaching the first of six modules for the club's Boat Handling course over in Brunswick. My module was *Knots and Line Handling*. The class was fun as it was totally hands on. Our four stellar students learned all about lines, their construction, strength, uses, etc. They also learned how to tie 10 knots as well as the bonus "Flying Bowline." I threw that one in so I could impress Mike Moye.

Even though my duty was complete, I attended the rest of the seminars. Why? Do I not have a life? Yes, I do, but I sat in because I learn something every time. I don't care if it's ABC for the sixth time, Marine Navigation, or Boat Handling. The stories alone are worth the price of admission. The seminar that Vicky Jefferis got to teach (I'm jealous) was called *Emergencies on Board*. If you want to hear stories, sit in on this one. Everyone participates! One of the things we always talk about are people running aground. Marine Navigation and other courses teach people how not to run aground, but Vicky teaches you what to do if you run aground.

As Vicky explains, the first steps are to have everyone put on life jackets and then to check that nobody is injured or fell overboard. Check for leaks and hull damage. If it is a soft grounding and there is minimal or no damage, you may be able to get free by floating or pushing off. Check the tide tables. If the tide is flooding, you may not be stuck too long. If the tide is ebbing the water will leave you harder aground as time goes by.

At this point in the class, we started hearing all kinds of stories of people not willing to wait for the tide to float them off. Some get off the boat and try to push as they sink in the mud up to their waist or worse, get pinned by their own boat and drown. (I heard that story from one of our local Coast Guard Auxiliary members.)

Jerry told the story of a guy here on Saint Simons Island who, when he ran aground, flagged down a big commercial fishing boat to ask if they would pull him off the sandbar. They told him they would, but he had to get them his line. When he asked them how he was supposed to do that, they said "Swim." He then proceeded to crawl on his stomach over the mud so he wouldn't sink and eventually got his line over to the other boat. I remember thinking that it might've been better just to wait for the tide to come in. I figured there had to be better and smarter ways to get out of such a jam. Here are some creative ideas that could work in an emergency and might even make MacGyver proud.

I put on my thinking cap and thought that if I had a drone on the boat and I ran aground, I could send the drone over to another boat to deliver my line instead of me having to wade through mud. Jerry and I own a couple drones, the kind that can take videos. Now if you think a drone couldn't possibly hold a dock line, you're right. But it could lift a very light rope that is connected to another rope, that is connected to the dock line.

In the knot tying seminar, we learned to tie a sheet bend. The sheet bend is amazing! It is so simple it doesn't even seem like it should work. Its main purpose in life is to join two lines of unequal size together; it holds like a champ. If you don't have a long enough line or if you want to connect a lighter line to a heavier line, this knot is for you. Using the sheet bend, I would tie dock line to the very long, lightweight, polypropylene line that we carry, to an even lighter line (that I haven't identified yet). This very light line is what the drone would actually have to carry. The other people would then pull on the light rope delivered to their boat to eventually get to our dock line. Easy peasy! I thought I was brilliant.

When I told Jerry my idea, he remarked nonchalantly that I was talking about a 'messenger line.' I was?

According to Wikipedia, "a messenger line is a light line attached to the end of a main mooring line, used to assist in heaving a mooring to the shore or to another ship." I guess I was talking about a messenger line.

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Executive Officer's Report (cont'd)

The Coast Guard uses messenger lines all the time to pass lines between vessels. They sometimes use a specially adapted firearm to pass lines (see photo below). It works great in rolling seas when the deck is really pitching.

So, it was a good idea after all, I just didn't invent it.

But if you don't have a specially adapted firearm or drone on board? What else could you do?

At our last social, I was talking to Charles Wilsdorf about this idea with the drones, and he mentioned something called a 'monkey fist' that some people can throw really far. Now I was totally confused. What the heck is a monkey fist, and how do Jerry and Charles know all this stuff? (I'm convinced both have forgotten more about boating than I will ever know.).

I go back to Google and find out from a website called Mystic Knotwork ("the first and oldest knot shop in the United States"), that the monkey fist is a knot used at the end of a line to add weight.

According to their website, "Once tied, the monkey fist is attached to the end of a lightweight line which then is attached to the heavier lines that need to get to the dock or other boats etc. The monkey fist is thrown easily with the lighter line, able to reach its destination with accuracy, then the heavier line can be hauled in." You can make your own or you can buy one already made. See picture on the right. (I'd like one for Christmas if anyone cares.).

They now make these heaving/rescue balls made out of durable PVC, You can buy them already attached to 70 feet of solid braid float rope. Pretty cool, huh.

So don't run aground, but if you do…these ideas might do the trick.

Squadron Education Officer Report

SEO Mike Moye, SN

Our last ABC class for 2023 occurred on October 7. We had a great group of folks in the class and expect to pick up some new members from it. We have not opened up the registration portal on our web site for the 2024 classes, but we do have the dates. They will be February 3, April 6, and October 12.

The Boat Handling class for 2023 will be completed in a couple of weeks. We hope that there will be a demand from members who have completed the ABC class for another Boat Handling class in 2024. We're also always interested in learning about demand for other advanced courses or seminars. If you have a desire for any of the many offerings you may spot on our website, contact anyone on the bridge or any of our instructional team members.

This past week I spoke with an individual retired from the Coast Guard. He did his work on Lake Michigan at a station on the upper peninsula of Michigan. I gave him one of our famous South Georgia grins and commented, "I'll bet it was interesting in the winter up there." He surprised me by saying that they closed their station on September 1 each year. He went on to point out that at this time of the year it's very cold on the northern parts of Lake Michigan and recreational boaters are rarely on the water. In fact, he went on to say that in just a short time the U.P. folks would be spending their time ice fishing, not boating. Oh well. That's a very different lifestyle than what we experience in the south. But the northern folk certainly find ways to enjoy their climate. I've spoken to others who say they really enjoy driving out to their favorite fishing hole (that's driving as in a truck and hole as in a round hole in the ice). They say there's nothing quite like grabbing some bait, throwing a six pack in a cooler and spending time with their buds at the hole. Knowing that they were ice fishing, I asked why they bothered with a cooler for the beer. You can guess the answer—it was to keep it from freezing!

Not all the boaters in the north winterize their boats, shrink wrap them, and place them in very big, heated warehouses. Some, particularly on the east coast, head to our sunny south. Whether they're traveling by land or on the water, we call these folks snowbirds. The increased traffic can be a bit bothersome, but the economic impact they bring is something our hotels, restaurants, fuel vendors, and marinas welcome.

No doubt you've read all about it by now, but decision makers in our Georgia Department of Transportation apparently decided to treat closing our Intra-coastal Waterway the same way they treat a lane closure on I-95. This would have been a major problem for any vessels traveling north or south on the AICW and particularly in the Savannah area—whether snowbirds or our boating friends from Tybee Light. Their plan was to close the waterway for extensive daytime hours each day plus three complete days each week for a period of two months and with very little notice. This closure of the waterway is for demolition of the old Causton Bluff bridge. The Coast Guard had given notice that the waterway would not experience any closures. Georgia's DOT thought they had a better idea.

The people (we boaters and those with marine interests) spoke loudly about this very unsafe and disruptive situation which resulted in DOT changing their plan. It could have been quite a mess though. The demolition of the old and now unused Causton Bluff bridge was needed because of the new Island Expressway bridge. It's located just south of where the AICW crosses the Savannah River. Halting your travel for a bridge opening that only occurs once per hour is a common thing in heavily populated areas. But holding traffic for days at a time over a period of two months is a bit much. With DOT's new plan, the snowbirds will be able to visit the Golden Isles after all. It will still take some planning to time the tides and the opening of the waterway, but no one said boating was without a few challenges.

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Squadron Education Officer's Report (cont'd)

So, how do you keep from being caught in a debacle like this?

In our classes we talk about the **Local Notice to Mariners (LNM)** issued by the Coast Guard District Commander. These notices are issued weekly, and they can be received via email along with other critical maritime information, and it's a free service. The most recent LNM is September 27, 2023. There is a special section on bridges which includes information on construction, demolition, repair, etc. The information on the Causton Bluff project was last updated on June 6, 2023. It specifically said that the demolition was "not expected to impact the channel or impede navigation." It does point out that the channel will be closed when certain activities take place and that times will be posted when available. My most up-to-date information came from the **Waterway Guide Navigation Alerts**. They were spot on and very accurate with what's going on and what we should do if passing through that area.

Another good source is the **Salty Southeast Cruiser Net**. The most entertaining, however, is **Loose Cannon** which is written by Peter Swanson. He's a "take no prisoners" writer who does not give navigational alerts but does have a thing or two to say when he hears about things like our bridge situation.

Happy Boating (and watch for those low bridges),

Mike Moye, SN

Club Education Officer

Mike Moye (in red) and Garland Pendergraph (in blue) from the Brunswick Flotilla of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary teamed up to do multiple vessel exams for the Lowndes County High School Bass Fishing Team.

Shown with Mike and Garland are three of the more than twenty captains who volunteer with the team. In a tournament the captain operates the vessel for the two high school anglers aboard. All vessels have safety inspections, captains and anglers complete an approved safe boating course and file a float plan prior to the day's tournament. Successful anglers earn significant college scholarship assistance.

Mike and Garland have joined in a cooperative effort several times to assist Bass Fishing teams and Boy Scout paddle craft participants with yearly vessel inspections.

Administrative Officer's Report

AO Eileen Berta

Our past and present Commanders both regaled us with their nautical knowledge and expertise this month.

Many of us attended as Commander Jerry Lamb joined with staff of Jekyll Mosaic to present on the history of yachting among the Jekyll millionaires as Jerry compared the technology of the day with today's navigational aids. We were all surprised to see a chart that Jerry shared showing us how wide the Jekyll Creek was back in that day. So that's how they got those yachts up to the wharf! A great opportunity to showcase our club!

Thanks again to Past Commander Charles Wilsdorf for his interesting and informative presentation at our social the following week on the Cooperative Charting program. Peppered with his own experiences and anecdotes, the talk gave us an appetite for participating in the program! And an appetite for the pizza that was enjoyed by all!

For October we will try again for a fun evening at Barrier Island Brewing. The Fall weather promises to be cooler than the uncomfortable heat that caused us to cancel in August, and we should be able to enjoy a fun social evening together in their outdoor beer garden.

October Social
Date: Tuesday, October 17
Time: 6:00PM
Place: Barrier Island Brewing
1226 Ocean Blvd, SSI
912-268-2774
bibssi.com

Questions: **eileenberta@gmail.com**

Please note that we will not be meeting in November, as the month is full of local RSM Classic activities and Thanksgiving travel. Our annual Christmas Party and wacky gift exchange will be held in early December, look for dates and details to follow.

Adventures on the Cumberland River

Submitted by: Charles Wilsdorf, SN-ON

As a young boy, my family's home was on a small bluff overlooking the Cumberland River in Nashville, Tennessee. Our river frontage had a great sandy beach. Many a day I can remember sitting on the beach when a barge (a tug pushing a barge) would go by. When the wake hit the beach, it was like being on an ocean beach with the waves rolling in. Many times, that was my cue to walk downstream in order to wade out to collect the boats which had floated off the beach from the barge waves. That was my beach job.

Unfortunately, I lost my father and my mother decided to move for fear of me drowning in the river while she went off to work. I missed my dad and that river. It was nearly ten years later when we moved again for my mother's work. We moved back very close to the Cumberland River again, this time much further downstream from where we had lived before.

My mother worked for a family-owned water heater manufacturer and the management there had a few perks. One of those perks was a houseboat built initially from water heater tanks and a 1959 Owens 15-foot outboard runabout. I was able to use them both whenever I wanted. It was a perfect situation for me. My friends and I spent many days and nights on that river waterskiing by day and anchoring or docking in the evenings on the houseboat. I was fourteen years old. This was a great life for sure.

We really enjoyed water skiing through the large wakes (many times well over 15 feet high) left by the barges. Sometimes you would lose sight of the skier with the towrope partially under the wave.

One day while towing a skier through the tug's wake, I noticed I was closing on the tug's stern much faster than usual. I guessed that the tug was in astern propulsion. I immediately turned around to pick up my skier while thinking that I had seen another boat like ours when we had come down the river earlier. I thought "Oh no. I hope they didn't get run over." After picking up the skier, I immediately headed up the river to find two men in the water. We pulled the two out of the water and brought them aboard. They explained that their engine had stopped, and they could not restart it so they had to jump overboard and swim for their lives to avoid being run over by the barge. It would have been impossible for the barge to stop or even maneuver around the small boat.

The barge operator (the tug captain) saw that I had retrieved the men and motioned to me to come alongside. Many questions were asked. By this time the two men were claiming that in addition to their boat being sunk, they had large sums of money and tools onboard their boat and they wanted to be compensated. The barge captain got all of our names and addresses. I told him where I would be docked for the next couple of days.

That evening around an hour after sunset a gentleman jumped aboard knocking on the door where we were docked inquiring if I was the one who retrieved the two men out of the river. He explained that he was a contract diver who was working for Ingram Materials, the owners of the barge. He asked if I could meet him the next morning at the accident

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Adventures on the Cumberland River (cont'd)

scene to help him recover the boat and that he would make sure I was compensated. I kept wondering what I would be doing to help. I found out when we met the following morning. In addition to me knowing approximately where the accident occurred, the diver explained we were going to tow a dragline between our two boats so we could snag the wrecked boat. In the next three hours we snagged many objects. Each time the diver would dive on the object only to surface and say no boat yet. After another half hour or so we finally snagged the boat.

The tug came over to our location where the diver had attached lifting lines to the sunken boat. Using its crane, the tug lifted the boat to the surface. The water was pumped out and the boat brought aboard. Surprisingly, the boat did not look to be damaged too badly, only the windshield and motor cover were missing. The conclusion was the barge's bow had gently pushed the boat under the water. No tools, billfolds, or money were ever recovered.

Afterwards, we got back to waterskiing. That evening the diver came aboard again and gave me a $175.00 check and my friend a $75.00 check for helping with the salvage. That was more money than I had ever made before. I felt rich!

While chatting with the diver, I learned that Ingram Materials had already settled with the two men. The company definitely broke the boat, but still, those two guys should not have crossed in front of that barge.

I am no maritime legal expert, but I would guess both vessels held some responsibility for the collision.

In the US Coast Guard Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook it is stated that in determining which boat is the Stand-On and Give-Way there are dependencies which must be considered:

1. The situation: meeting, overtaking, or crossing
2. Rule 18, specifies type of vessel the "Pecking Order" must be considered

Rule 18 specifies that a vessel who has Restrictive Ability to Maneuver is the Stand-on Vessel with the exception of a Vessel Not Under Command (a broke boat). The vessels in the RAM category are vessels which are engaged in some type of work. A tug pushing or towing falls into this category. Many people refer to a tug pushing barges as just a barge.

Epilogue: The little Owens (photo on left) ended up being my first powerboat after I purchased it from Ingram Materials. Shortly after, the company requested that I let one of their customers use it for a week. Unfortunately, the boat was holed and sank in 20 feet of water at the dock. The company returned my boat a few days later along with a check for my original purchase price less $1. After a day of repairs, I was back on the Cumberland River skiing with that little boat and with a little more change in my pocket.

At 14, it was a great life for sure.

CAUTIONARY TALES

Robin, prepare to abandon ship!

Submitted by Mark Crawford, AP

This is a story of how quickly things can go wrong on a boat and how preparation saved the day. There are several lessons here and I think about them every time I get on my boat at Hampton River Marina.

Robin and I had just recently bought a house at Lake of the Ozarks and of course we needed a boat. I quickly became the proud owner of a 29-foot Four Winns bowrider. It was not long before some issues developed. The engine would start fine one time and not work at all the next. Many other issues started cropping up. It seemed there were electrical gremlins in the boat. I finally found a great mechanic, Eric, who lives and works on the lake who got the boat working nicely.

The day after Thanksgiving the lake was deserted, and the weather was beautiful. Let's go on a boat ride! We took our favorite cruise at a leisurely pace with the cool wind in our faces. What a day!

That is until we pulled into our cove on Gravois Creek not 400 yards from our house. I am planning how to dock and Robin yells, "There is white smoke coming out of the engine cover and there is a crackling sound!" I stopped the boat to find not just a little but a lot of smoke coming from the engine cover. It looked like a full fire. I yelled to Robin "LIFE VESTS NOW!"

I grabbed the fire extinguisher and raised the engine cover to find billowing white smoke and then yelled "ROBIN – PREPARE TO ABANDON SHIP!" The entire bottle was used in seconds. By this time, we both had on life vests and were prepared to jump into the cold water. The good news was the shore was only a hundred yards or so. I had the presence of mind to toss the anchor overboard.

The fire appeared to be out but there was lingering smoke. We both moved to the bow as far from the engine as possible. A second fire extinguisher would have been nice! I was not looking forward to a swim. After a few minutes everything appeared to be OK. The smoke dissipated and it felt like it was over. But now we are stuck in the middle of the cove with a fire damaged boat on the day after Thanksgiving.

Fortunately, Eric, my boat mechanic was close by. I called him and within 15 minutes he arrived and towed us to our dock. Once the boat was in the dock the fire rekindled and we used a fire extinguisher from the house to put it out. After inspection Eric determined it was an electrical fire. He called me later in the day with a terse statement "you are selling that boat!"

There are so many lessons in this story. Keep those life vests handy and know how to get them on quickly. I would strongly recommend more than one fire extinguisher and be certain they are easily accessible and know how to use them. If your boat has an inboard fire suppression system, make sure it is functional. Make sure your anchor is accessible and not tangled. Sign up with one of the tow boat companies.

I never want to say again "Robin, prepare to abandon ship!

QUIZ TIME

Q: What do you call a microphone designed to be used underwater for recording or listening to underwater sound?

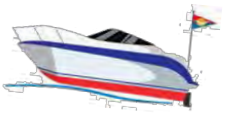
a) A hydrophone
b) A requirement for fun
c) Something that can foul your prop
d) All of the above

America's Boating Club of Golden Isles Calendar OCT - DEC 2023

October
October 7 - ABC Class
October 17 - Club social at Barrier Island Brewing
October 21 - District 26 Fall Conference (Virtual)
October 22 - Club cruise to St. Mary's

November
November 7 - Porthole content due
November 14 - EXCOM meeting
November 18 - Club Cruise to Jekyll

December
December TBD - Christmas Party & Yankee Swap



Upcoming Club Cruises*

October 22 - St. Mary's
November 18 - Jekyll (Zachry's)

*Remember: all cruise dates are subject to change

Fun Times

Photos: J. Lamb, S. Luta

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 Moye, SN	229-454-6791	mmoye@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	rfhindery@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

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.

