

# Potomac River Yacht Clubs Association



Volume 12

Issue 3

November 2000

## November Election Issue

### Officers 2000

**Commodore**

Monica Lovell, o2bboatn@aol.com  
(Occoquan)

**Vice Commodore**

Phil Bolin, pwbolin@earthlink.net  
(Aquia Harbour)

**Rear Commodore**

Curt Johnson, tailhookboater@cs.com  
(Aquia Harbour)

**Secretary**

Chris Reed, piperreed@starpower.net  
(Capital)

**Treasurer**

Steve Wexler,  
steve@marcherconsultants.com  
(Occoquan)

**Fleet Captain**

Randy Semper, rsemper@erols.com  
(Aquia Harbour)

**Immediate Past Commodore**

Mark Viehoever, tkfive@aol.com  
(Tantallon)

[www.PotomacRiverYachtClubs.org](http://www.PotomacRiverYachtClubs.org)

**Members-At-Large**

Walt Cheatham,  
CheathaW@pentagon.af.mil  
(Occoquan)

Joe Hadley, hadmck@aol.com  
(Fort Washington)

Toby Jarman, jotoby@erols.com  
(Prince William)

Wayne Kuster, wjkuster@aol.com  
(Swan Point)

Andrea Storey, awstorey28@aol.com  
(District)



Winter Practice Session for PRYCA Dinghy Race



### From the Commodore

Monica Lovell

It's hard to believe that the first boating season of the new century is drawing to a close. Though we still have some beautiful Fall cruising to look forward to, it's always depressing to think about winterizing. I hope everyone has had a safe and gratifying season.

PRYCA had a very successful year. As mentioned in the last newsletter, the web site was updated by Ned Rhodes and the Handbook and By-laws were revised and posted on-line. Cobb Island Days, held in June, was well attended, the weather was perfect and everyone had a great time. The Float-In was once again a tremendous success thanks to the hard work of Float-In Coordinator Curt Johnson, the entire Float-In Committee and the many members who participated. The first "Dog Days of August," held at Colonial Beach, brought many new faces, a fabulous trip to a local vineyard, a pig roast and terrific band to close out the evening. Additionally, the End of Summer Party hosted by Tantallon Yacht Club was full of fun competition, laughter and camaraderie.

We still have some chilly-weather boating to look forward to as December brings the annual lights parade in Washington Channel. Finally, to officially close 2000 and welcome 2001, the January Change of Watch will be held, once again, at the Crystal City Sheraton.

I would like to thank my entire Board for its outstanding effort and commitment throughout the year. Without the Board members' support, hard work and dedication, a Commodore would surely sink, not swim; and without a strong, supportive membership, PRYCA would not be the successful organization that it is.

### From the Vice Commodore

Phil W. Bolin  
pwbolin@earthlink.net

Next year, 2001, will be PRYCA's 30th year and it is time to celebrate. Our 2001 schedule will focus on safe and fun events.

The purpose of PRYCA is to support recreational boating activities, and specifically to:

Encourage and promote yachting, boating safety, and the advancement of yachting clubs within the Potomac River Basin; represent its Member Clubs and their individual members in all matters affecting their interests and the interests of recreational boaters in general.

At our last meeting we decided to add "support camaraderie among member clubs" to our purpose. Let's get to know the other clubs.

PRYCA supports three groups of activities to help promote camaraderie. First, we advertise events of other clubs to all. Second, we co-sponsor events such as the Cobb Island Days, Dog Days, and the Tantallon End of Summer Party. Third, we put on two events each year, the Change of Watch Dinner Dance in January and the Float-In in July.

During the next two months we will be reviewing activities and events for 2001 and plan to publish a schedule in early January. We are also taking a very serious look at what PRYCA can do to help promote safety on the water.

We would appreciate your views as well as the views of clubs and the individual members of all our clubs. If you have a comment or suggestion please tell a PRYCA Board member or email me at pwbolin@earthlink.net.

### From The Rear Commodore

Curt Johnson  
tailhookboater@cs.com

#### Under The Influence

In January 1988 operating a vessel while intoxicated became a specific Federal offence. Standards for determining when the operator of a vessel is intoxicated were established. When the blood alcohol content (BAC) of the operator of a recreational vessel was 0.10% or higher, that person was considered to be legally intoxicated. The Coast Guard has proposed a revision to the Federal law to lower the BAC standard to 0.08%. This would bring the Federal regulation into alignment with the 0.08% BAC regulation of many States. They also propose to replace the term "intoxicated" with "under the influence of alcohol or dangerous drugs." This would bring the regulations into conformance with current statutory language.

Boating while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not only illegal, it is dangerous. Alcohol is a depressant to the nervous system. It can cause a degradation of balance, coordination, judgment, and vision. When exposed to sun, wind, engine noise, and the rolling and pitching of a vessel, a boater drinking alcoholic beverages can become fatigued much more quickly than normal. Alcohol can also accelerate the loss of body heat, which can bring on the effects of hypothermia more rapidly if an intoxicated person is immersed in cold water. Half of all boating accidents are alcohol or drug related. Over a quarter of all boating deaths recorded since 1986 have involved the improper use of alcohol or drugs or a combination of both.

The penalties for a person operating a recreational vessel while

under the influence of alcohol or drugs are severe. Such a person can be subjected to a civil penalty of an amount up to \$1000, or a criminal penalty up to \$5000, one-year imprisonment, or both. Lawsuits arising from boating mishaps that involved excessive use of alcoholic beverages can result in pecuniary damages that are orders of magnitude larger than such fines. The risks involved with boating while under the influence far exceed any pleasure that might be derived from drinking alcoholic beverages.

### Hoax Distress Calls

Every year during the boating season there are a large number of distress calls made over VHF radio channels. Most are heard on channel 16, the hailing and distress channel, and most are legitimate. Unfortunately there are some people who think it is funny or just a harmless prank to make a false distress or MAYDAY call. Unsupervised children sometimes make prank distress calls. What pleasure or satisfaction they can derive from making such calls is hard to understand. The Coast Guard responds with all possible haste whenever a distress call is received. There is no way to determine whether or not such an incoming call is legitimate. No matter what the weather conditions may be, the Coast Guard dispatches assets to conduct search and rescue operations, often putting their personnel at risk. The cost for conducting a search and rescue operation is expensive.

The cost to operate the average Coast Guard Cutter is about \$1,500 per hour. A Coast Guard Aircraft costs about \$4,000 per hour to conduct a search operation.

When Coast Guard assets are committed to responding to a hoax call,

their ability to respond fully to a legitimate distress call is diminished. For example, a man and his son died when their boat sank. They had made a distress call at the same time that a hoax call was made. The Coast Guard heard and responded to the hoax call that blocked the true distress call and the result was a tragedy. The hoax caller was never identified, but one must wonder how much pleasure or satisfaction this prank gave him.

A few years ago an intoxicated man made a hoax MAYDAY call repeatedly on a VHF radio from his home. Using radio direction finders, the Coast Guard was able to locate his house and he was promptly arrested. When someone is caught making a hoax distress call they are in for some severe punishment. They can receive up to six years in prison, and be fined up to \$250,000. Furthermore, they can be held accountable for all the costs incurred by the Coast Guard in responding to the hoax distress call. There is nothing funny about a false distress call. It is not a harmless prank, and in some Courts it is treated as a felony. If you know and can identify someone who is making a false distress call on a radio, call your nearest Coast Guard Unit and report it. The hoax caller is costing taxpayer dollars and putting the lives of people at risk.

These articles were reprinted from the "CBYCA Chartroom Chatter" and the National Boating Federation "Lookout." Appreciation expressed to Nancy Harper and David Goodman.

### Quotable Quote

"Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately, the experience usually comes from bad judgment."

### From the Fleet Captain

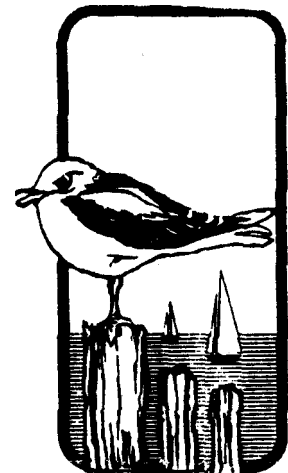
Randy Semper

By the time you read this column the 2000 boating season will be close to ending for many of us. But if your boat is still operational in early December there are Parade of Lights festivities planned both in Old Town Alexandria and in the Washington Channel. I'm sure you will hear more about the dates from the organizers of both events.

The Bridge has already started discussing plans for next year. One of our goals is to renew our efforts to promote boating safety. Those efforts will figure into our meetings and the PRYCA Float-In.

Next year we again plan to have the PRYCA Float-In at Fort Washington Marina. I have contacted the marina and we tentatively identified the July 20-22 weekend for the Float-In. I will confirm the dates prior to the November Delegates meeting. The Float-In this year will continue with the PRYCA Cup, but hopefully with less intense competition.

My thanks to all of you that helped stage the 2000 Float-In. I hope you are up to it again this year.





**From the Treasurer**

Steve Wexler

At the delegate’s meeting in November your faithful Treasurer will once again amaze you with another balanced budget. I just can’t figure out why the Federal government took so long to understand the process...we’ve been doing it for over 25 years.

From the acorn’s nest—here’s wishing all of you a healthy New Year and a Happy Holiday Season!!!

Here’s the Statement of Financial Condition for 2000 to-date:

**Statement of Financial Condition**

October 20, 2000

|                          |             |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Opening Balance (1/1/00) |             | \$7,861.99  |
| Deposits:                |             |             |
| Dues                     | \$1,165.00  |             |
| Change of Watch          | \$8,780.00  |             |
| Float-in                 | \$18,037.25 |             |
| Interest                 | \$55.16     |             |
| Other (Inventory Sales)  | \$343.00    |             |
| Total Deposits:          |             | \$28,380.41 |
| Expenses:                |             |             |
| Newsletter / Website     | \$364.05    |             |
| Corporation Fees         | \$80.00     |             |
| Boat Roster / Handbook   | \$211.12    |             |
| NBF Dues                 | \$250.00    |             |
| Change of Watch          | \$11,464.08 |             |
| Float-in                 | \$17,315.94 |             |
| PRYCA Sponsored Events   | \$400.00    |             |
| Other                    | \$586.69    |             |
| Total Expenses:          |             | \$30,671.88 |
| Closing Balance          |             | \$5,570.52  |

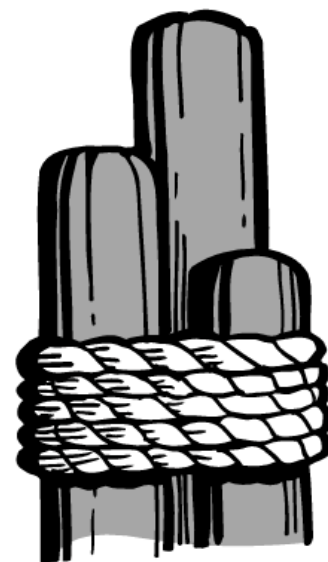


**From MAL Storey**

Andrea Storey

The attached letter was sent in support of retaining a commercial facility in the upper Potomac for the use of boaters, commercial or pleasure craft, who have no other alternatives short of Ft. Washington for smaller boats or Cobb Island and Colonial Beach for larger boats. For emergency situations none of the above are feasible solutions.

The current status of Anacostia Marina is as follows: Boaters who have contracts with the current management of Anacostia Marina will have their contracts completed. No new work will be contracted. The yard will be open 7 days a week with National Park Service guards present to sign workers and boat owners into and out of the yard. When contacted last week the guard on duty had no ending date on his orders; however, USPS previously indicated 10/31/00 as the date the yard would close.



Mr. Robert Stanton  
Director, National Park Service  
1849 C St., NW, Rm 3316  
Washington, DC 20246

August 22, 2000

Dear Mr. Stanton,

It has been brought to the attention of the Potomac River Yacht Clubs Association (PRYCA) by several of its member clubs that The National Park Service (NPS) has advised Anacostia Marina, Inc. that their lease, which expires on September 30, 2000, will not be renewed and that the lessee will be required to vacate the premises by that time. This leaves the Washington, DC area without a local large boat repair facility. We understand the NPS has further advised all boat owners at the marina to remove their boats no later than September 1, 2000. Some of these boats are on shore for major repairs and are not seaworthy. It is our understanding that these actions are a result of EPA violations.

Since the NPS posted the notices there has been much discussion, several meetings of concerned boat owners, letters from Anacostia Marina, Inc. and several newspaper articles. This letter states the position of the PRYCA that represents 21 yacht clubs on the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers and their tributaries.

The PRYCA's primary purpose is to encourage and promote boating safety and to this end questions the closing of the only facility within 65 miles that is capable of handling boats over 35 tons or with beams over 14 1/2 feet. There are over 100 recreational boats in the Washington, DC area that require a facility of this size. The next closest facilities are located off the Potomac River at Cobb Island, MD and Colonial Beach, VA, representing a 4-10 hour trip depending on the speed and condition (towed or damaged) of the boat in question. In addition to recreational boats, there are tourist industry cruise boats that also use this facility for emergencies and repairs. However, all boats in the area can use it for emergencies since it is the only commercial hauling facility in the immediate vicinity. Aside from safety and environmental hazards created by the loss of the only large scale hauling facility in the Washington, DC area, there would be a substantial increase in operation costs to those who had to move to alternative facilities 65 miles away. This moves a substantial core of revenue out of Washington, DC.

With regard to safety and environmental issues, the elimination of a large boat repair facility in the Washington, DC area has potential environmental impact due to sinking or damaged boats that have no place to go or be towed to. The EPA cited the sinking of two boats at the Anacostia Marina, Inc. Not cited was the number of boats that were prevented from sinking by being taken there for hauling or repair.

The PRYCA is not challenging the right of the NPS to control its permittees or lessees. We are, however, challenging the decision to close the facility for any length of time, no matter how short, without a local large boat repair facility alternative. The NPS has a responsibility to the community to support safe marine recreation through provision of reasonably accessible facilities that match the requirements of the recreational, tourist industry and public safety boating users.

We appreciate your consideration of the points referenced in this letter and will be waiting for a response that recognizes the needs of the community.

CC:  
John Hale, Superintendent  
National Capital Parks East

Terry Caristrom, Regional Director  
National Capital Region



### From the Editor

Ned W. Rhodes  
rhodesn@softsysgrp.com

I just looked at my article from July, and I figured that I could just rerun it. Let me give you the high points:

- Go to the web site at <http://PotomacRiverYachtClub.org> and read all the good stuff that is there
- Send me pictures, links and content
- I will do more as time permits

There, now how about those Redskins? Actually, I have not seen too many of the games because the weather has been so nice. The weekend of the Annapolis Powerboat Show was wonderful and I am beginning to think that I would look good in a 60-foot something. The Novatec looked nice as did the Jeffersons, although I am still an "Express" kind of a guy and thought that the new Sea Ray 680 Sun Sport on the cover of Boating would look pretty nice with me in it. What does it sound like as you sip 144 gallons an hour running 35 knots? Just think, when I am seventy, I will be able to afford the 680, although it will probably be the 2001 model year (if you didn't get that, I'll tell you later, but remember that I am not 70 THIS year and won't be for 20 years give or take).

This year at the Boat Show, I did pretty well with free beers. Did you collect yours? I got one on Toby and Joanne Jarmon's new Ocean Alexander. It didn't take very long either—get onboard, get a beer. I got my second one when we bought our second cooler bag. It was hot in the tent and they looked so cold. Best \$65 I ever spent on a beer (big bag, never leaks).

I could wish you happy holidays, but Wexler already did and it is not even Halloween yet as I write this. So here's to good boating. Visit the web site and tell me how much you like it.

### From MAL Joe Hadley

#### Thunderstorms Planning is Everything

It has or will happen to all of us. Thunderstorms occur with such frequency along the Potomac River that the chances are you have or will be caught in one.

Having had the "pleasure" several times, I was quite surprised recently when, on an experienced friend's boat, it became apparent she had never thought through what to do when being out when a thunderstorm is inevitable.

During most of the season boaters on the Potomac must anticipate thunderstorms. Starting in May, they occur with increasing regularity and intensity until after Labor Day, trailing off as the weather cools through late September and October. They can form at any time of day or night. The worst for us, and the ones boaters must anticipate and avoid, the ones under discussion here, typically develop quickly during the warmer mid- to late afternoon, usually moving in quite rapidly from anywhere in the West towards anywhere East, and dissipating as rapidly as they formed.

Called "air mass thunderstorms," these storms are associated with our heat and humidity and can be readily contrasted with the even larger, thunder-containing storms preceding the summertime invasion of a cold front.

Accordingly, rule one is don't be making a passage or otherwise be too far from a safe haven (15 – 20 minutes max.) between about 3 – 6 PM, especially is the weather is or has been hot and humid.

But, as stated at the beginning, we all have been or will be out there when a thunderstorm hits. In such an event,

what does the conventional wisdom suggest?

For the best in conventional wisdom refer to rule one, above. Some clubs—mine at Ft. Washington, for one—schedule their outings to start early in the day and to end early, usually by 2 PM. This is all the more important later in the season when it tends to be hotter and hurricane season has begun.

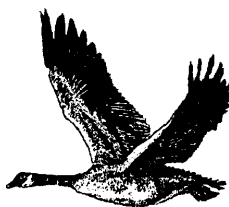
Convention also holds that one could always run to the East and seek shelter, preferably adjacent to a good watering hole with a fine view. Despite the latter, several times just this summer as a storm came up above Prince William County, VA the marina at Sweden Point in Mattawoman Creek filled up, especially with smaller, more open boats that knew better than to try to run back West into the Occoquan area.

Let's call this rule two: if you have the time to get there, 15 minutes or more, run towards the East and seek shelter.

But the problem remains: what do we do when we can't avoid the thunderstorm?

If you see what appears to be a thunderstorm forming and there's a possibility that you're going to be hit, consider this basic plan:

First, decide to act early and get out of the channel (or the middle of the Bay) and into some shallower water—not too shallow but at least about 4 to 5 times the amount you normally draw. Reason: in shallow water waves resulting from a storm can really get pushed up in height, just like waves coming towards a beach. Since you're already going to rock 'n roll, why not stay out a little farther in the deeper water where you won't be bounced around quite as badly. You might not notice the difference during the height of the storm but that said about shallower water is all too true.



Second, having gotten out of the channel to shallower water, get ready to anchor. The prime reason you should decide to act early is that you will find it much easier to anchor if you're not experiencing any major effect of the storm. As the storm nears or increases in intensity, neither you nor your crew will like being out forward, much less handling ground tackle with the boat trying to jump out from under whoever draws the short straw.

The anchor you want to use is the biggest, baddest, heaviest thing you've got with as much chain as possible.

If the storm hasn't really gotten started anchor in the conventional manner but be sure to let out extra scope, 7 to 1 is good, 10 to 1 is better. If you've positioned your boat in shallow-but-sufficiently-deep water you won't have to worry about letting out too much rode and the greater rode length will help hold all the better.

Another thing to consider is setting out a second anchor – any anchor, even your lunch hook—but, again, bigger is better. Deploy the second anchor +25 feet to either side of the first and tie off the second rode so that it is as close as possible to the first where it comes aboard. Even a little help for that second anchor might be all you need to guarantee that the first holds.

When anchoring remember to expect to be blown around in circles as the storm passes. After all a thunderstorm is half mini-hurricane and half mini-tornado. Once, having put in to Wade's Bay in advance of a thunderstorm we set two anchors and found eight twists in the rodes after the storm!

If it has already started to blow, before anchoring you might first try pulling out about 10 times the water depth of rode, securing the bitter end and, then, lowering the anchor. If it's blowing hard and/or your boat has a large sail-plane you could otherwise

experience considerable difficulty in securing the rode. Unless whoever is in control of the boat is able to maintain a steady position, bow to the wind, the rode can be ripped out at an alarming rate, more than one can readily control much less turn around a cleat.

Even if you've decide to call it a day and stay on the hook after the storm, think about leaving one or both engines running until after the storm proper has passed...you never know if those anchors are going to hold or if whatever is upwind of you might suddenly be coming straight at you.

Thus, rule three: act early to get out of the way and anchor as though your life depends on it. Keep your engine(s) running.

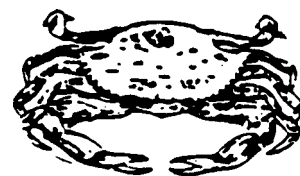
Last, if you have time to do so safely, strip the topsides of everything that might get blown away and put a line around everything you can't haul below. Keep a sharp lookout. Observe the storm as it passes and check to see if another storm cell is in its wake. Watch that you are not dragging your anchor and that nothing is coming your way. Consistent with always keeping a weather eye on the situation make sure that you and your crew take as much shelter as possible. Not infrequently the pelting rain in a thunderstorm will be accompanied by hail.

Remember also to be attentive to your guests lest they get frightened I such circumstances. Your early, decisive and organized approach to dealing with the inevitable will give them some reassurance if they have any idea of what's going on, but enlisting their assistance or at least explaining the whys and wherefores of what you just did could have and even more calming, if not a merely distracting, effect.

Last rule: secure the vessel itself and its crew and passengers; keep a lookout; take care of your guests.

Experience teaches that these

storms usually last from 20 minutes to an hour. You'll know when the storm is over and you'll be glad if you took the proper precautions.



From MAL Walt Cheatham

### Occoquan River No Wake Zone

Boating traffic will increase significantly on the Occoquan River with the opening of the new Belmont Bay Marina in spring 2001. Belmont is situated directly at the end of the current no wake zone. It will dump another 120 boats (including sailboats which will not be hindered by 44' bridge heights) into the traffic pattern on the narrow (100ft max) channel. The question is not whether the current no wake zone will have to be extended south of marker 10, but how far. Safety dictates that boats exiting Belmont Bay Marina do so in a no wake area. An extension will be unpopular with boaters who currently must navigate off plane for quite a distance from marinas upstream.

The channel narrows at marker 10 and remains so all the way past Konrad Island to marker 6 where there is finally wide water as the channel enters Occoquan Bay. Few boaters slow down no matter what is in the channel—sailboats, small fishing boats, canoes, etc. The increasing volume of PWC's are an additional concern, as is the impending operation of fast commercial ferries.

The Occoquan River Management Association (ORMA) recently asked its member Yacht Clubs to consider the

safety issues involved, poll their membership, and make a recommendation about how far to extend the no wake zone. Talk among captains who frequent the area includes these candidate distances: 1) all the way to marker 6; 2) to marker 8 which is probably a poor choice since it sits at a dog leg bend in the channel; and 3) somewhere between marker 8 and marker 10. Some have suggested having the location vary between weekdays when traffic is light and weekends when traffic can be intense. Few feel it can be any further north than just south of marker 10.

The intent is to provide user feedback to regulatory authorities who are already addressing the situation. No doubt a new traffic pattern will be in place by spring 2001. If you have input, contact ORMA c/o Occoquan Yacht Club, Box 469, Occoquan, VA 22125.

### From MAL Wayne Kuster Southern Region Clubs

As our boating season draws to a close, I would like to thank the clubs that I represent for their active support of PRYCA, and it would be remiss of me not to thank all the other clubs who attended our events. I was pleased to see how active the membership was and would like to highlight some of the southern region events:

Cobb Island Days, June 10 and 11: Again, this year the Cobb Island Yacht Club and their Commodore, Don Thayer, did an outstanding job, the weather was great and everyone in attendance had a great time.

Dog Days of August was the first PRYCA scheduled event at the Colonial Beach Yacht Center. The turnout was light but those of us who attended had a very nice time. The food was great, nice band and the open bar almost lasted all night!

### Boating Safety Education Council

Do we as PRYCA want to create a Boating Safety Education Council? We need your input. Get your input to a Board member or to me at [pwbolin@earthlink.net](mailto:pwbolin@earthlink.net).

The council could be chaired by a board member or board designee and become a clearinghouse for safety ideas generated by all member clubs. These ideas would then be passed to all other clubs and where appropriate PRYCA could help support institution of safety ideas across all member clubs.

It is a thought that came from one of our current board members and the Board is seriously considering instituting the concept. Would love to hear from all of you on your thoughts.



## Change of Watch

The Change of Watch for 2001 will be held at the Sheraton Crystal City, 1800 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington VA 22202.

The event will start our 30th year. It is going to be a blast. Beside a great dinner with good music and dancing, you'll get a preview of the 2001 schedule and some great insights into next year's Float-In competition. New procedures will allow for fun without the intense competition. But, yes someone will still take the Cup home.

The Change of Watch will be held Saturday, 20 January 2001. The fun will start at 5:15PM with a reception and the dinner starts at 7:00PM. The cost will be \$45.00 per person and you will have music and a choice of three main courses; prime rib, a chicken dish or salmon. Word on the street is that Steve Wexler has been signed up as the MC. Without Clinton in the White House don't know what his joke theme will be, but you can bet it will be good. Don't miss it.

Reservation forms will be handed out at the November PRYCA Board and Delegate meeting.

## Aids to Navigation

The following found at  
<http://www.boatingsafety.com/>  
 Phil W. Bolin  
[pwbolin@earthlink.net](mailto:pwbolin@earthlink.net)

Aids to navigation are placed along coasts and navigable waters as guides to mark safe water and to assist mariners in determining their position in relation to land and hidden dangers. Each aid to navigation is used to provide specific information. Several aids to navigation are usually used together to form a local aid to navigation system that helps the

mariner follow natural and improved channels. Such aids to navigation also provide a continuous system of charted marks for coastal piloting. Individual aids to navigation are used to mark landfall from seaward, and to mark isolated dangers.

Lateral markers are buoys or beacons that indicate the port and starboard sides of a route to be followed. Virtually all U.S. lateral marks follow the traditional 3R rule of "red, right, returning." This means, when returning from sea, keep red marks on the right hand (starboard) side of the vessel. Bear in mind, however, that travel on the ICW is considered to be "returning from sea" when traveling in a clockwise direction around the U.S.

## Waste

Most man-made debris can create aesthetic or environmental problems. The qualities that have made plastics so successful—light weight, strength, and durability—make plastic debris a persistent threat in our oceans and waterways.

Since most plastic tends to float, currents transport it to shore. Even in remote areas like Antarctica researchers are now finding plastic bottles, bags, and sheeting washed ashore. But plastic in our waterways is more than a litter problem. It kills!

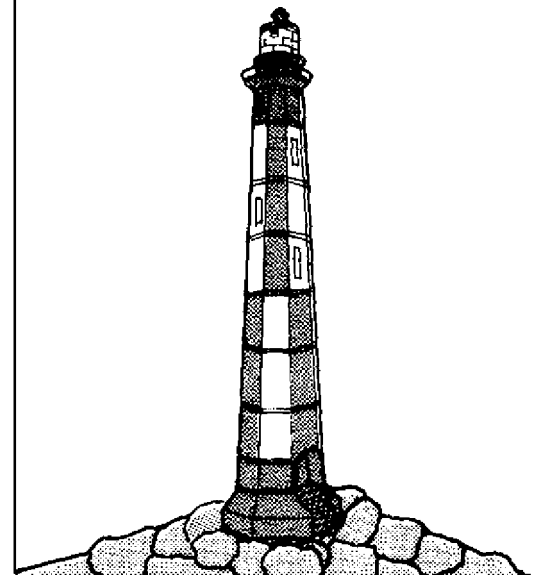
Marine animals sometimes confuse plastic items for real food—a fatal mistake. Ingested plastics can cause internal injury, intestinal blockage, or starvation. Seabirds are known to eat anything from small plastic pieces to plastic lighters and bottle caps. Some birds even feed plastic debris to their young. Sea turtles often mistake bags and sheeting for jellyfish, a favorite prey item. Even the great whales are victims—several have been found dead with plastic bags and sheeting in their stomachs. And ingesting plastic is not

the only problem.

Thousands of marine animals die every year from entanglement in plastic trash. Sometimes an animal accidentally swims into a piece of plastic and becomes ensnared, unable to escape. Curious seal pups are often attracted to floating debris and become entangled in plastic connector rings and fishing line, but also use plastic as nesting materials, which can create death traps for their young.

Plastic debris is not just a problem for wildlife. Plastics also can be a floating menace to navigation. Boaters report that plastic rope and line fouls propellers and that plastic bags and sheeting clog seawater intakes and evaporators, causing engine failure, costly repairs, and annoying delays. This type of vessel disablement can be life threatening.

The solution: don't put this stuff overboard.





## Coast Guard Allows Lighting Alternatives to Private Aids to Navigation

On October 4 USCG removed the requirement that only incandescent lighting be used for private aids to navigation. Subject to adverse comment, the new rule allowing the use of LEDs is effective January 3, 2001.

While it remains to be seen how this might affect Potomac River boaters, industry and private parties may now take advantage of recent changes in lighting technology to use lanterns based on LED technology.

### Preventing Hypothermia:

Fall and Winter Boating  
Tips from Boat/U.S.

The end of summer doesn't have to mean the end of boating. Many boaters find that fall and even mild winter days are uncrowded and beautiful out on the water. But though the air may be pleasant, the water will be colder, and cold water kills. According to the nation's largest organization of recreational boaters, Boat/U.S., many drowning deaths are caused by hypothermia—abnormally low body temperature—not by water in the lungs.

"Cold water robs the body of heat 25-30 times faster than air," said Ruth Wood, director of the Boat/U.S. Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water. "When someone falls overboard, their core temperature begins to drop within 10-15 minutes. And the water doesn't have to be icy—it just has to be colder than you are to cause hypothermia," she said.

The more energy someone spends after going overboard, the more quickly their body temperature drops, reducing their survival time. Wearing a life jacket adds to survival time in the water, not

only by minimizing motion needed to keep afloat, but also by helping insulate the body, Wood said.

"If you suddenly find yourself in the water, don't panic," she said, "because flailing around causes your body to lose heat a lot more quickly." Heads, necks, sides of the chest and groins are the body "hot spots" that lose heat most quickly and need to be protected the most. The best way to prevent hypothermia is to stay in the boat, but should you fall overboard, these tips can help you survive:

- \* Don't take off your clothes. Instead, button, buckle, zip and tighten collars, cuffs, shoes and hoods. If possible, cover your head—in cold water about half of heat loss comes from the head.

- \* Devote all your efforts to getting out of the water. Act quickly before you lose full use of your hands. Board a boat, raft, or anything floating. Turn a capsized boat over and climb in; remember most boats will support you

even when full of water. If you can't right the boat, climb on top of it.

- \* Don't try to swim, unless it is to reach a nearby boat, another person or a floating object you can climb or lean on. By releasing warm water between your clothing and your body and sending "warm" blood to your extremities, swimming can cut your survival time by as much as 50 percent.

- \* Even if it's painful, remain as still as possible. Intense shivering and severe pain in cold water are natural body reflexes. These will not kill you, but heat loss will.

- \* If you're with other people, huddle together for warmth. Otherwise, hold your knees to your chest to protect your trunk from heat loss, and clasp your arms around your calves.

For a free brochure about preventing and treating hypothermia, call the Boat/U.S. Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water at 1-800-336-2628 or order a copy online.





## A True Account of What Happened at the Tantallon YC End of Summer Party

Liz and Andrew Kalweit  
Occoquan Yacht Club

Tantallon Yacht Club did it again. They hosted another great End-of-Summer Party, September 22-24. And OYC did it again, too! We keep the Warped-Oar Award (and a talking fish) for another year. The weather behaved, and for some reason, so did we. OYC was a well-rested-looking group at Sunday brunch, with most of us having nodded off fairly early Saturday evening.

Friday afternoon Andrew, Abbey (First Place in the B a r k i n g Competition), and I were the first to arrive from OYC aboard *Lizzie Bitz*, followed by 11 other boats. All told, about 40 boats and 135 people from six clubs arrived for the weekend. Those of us who arrived Friday evening enjoyed the potluck dinner, and visiting with our fellow boaters.

Tantallon's Commodore Tom Andrews opened the games on Saturday afternoon. The first event, the tug-of-war, was close. OYC just met the minimum number of four people required to field a team, thanks to Tom ("I'm officially exempt from this") Coldwell stepping up to tug for the club. Anchor Randy, with Tom C., Andrew, and Tom Shank, won the event handily, after several heats. Ladies tug of war: After sizing up the

opposition (Tantallon) in the first heat, Candy Clevenger, Della Fleury, Mary Lynn Snowman and I hatched a plan that once they started tugging, we'd let go of the rope. Enough said.

The next event was watermelon-seed spitting, and things started heating up! Tantallon's Steve Buda tried to psych out the competition by pouring tabasco sauce on his watermelon wedges, but OYC was

with a 29-foot toss, which seemed impossible to beat. But National Potomac was unstoppable. They rose to the challenge with an amazing 30-foot, 10-inch toss in the fourth round.

The next event, the sack race, lasted just two heats. In a stunning display of agility, Dani Linck hopped across the field in the blink of an eye. National Potomac hopped in second and third behind her. In the second heat, the guys hopped, and Tom Shank won handily (or is that hoppily?), followed by Tantallon and National Potomac.

OYC capped off the day's games by placing first, second, third, fourth, and fifth in kayaking. Andrew placed first in the first heat against Tantallon's Tabasco Man Steve Buda, Tom Shank placed first in the second heat against National Potomac, Scott Shipley rowed unopposed in the third heat. In the fourth and fifth races, OYC's Dani rowed against Hannah from National Potomac and was the clear winner both times. Once

again, Tom Shank was the man, with Scott rowing in a mere five seconds off Tom's time, and Andrew five seconds behind Scott.

After a brief rest for visiting and cocktail hour, the day was capped off with the hat-decorating contest, dinner, dancing, raffle prizes, door prizes, awards, and more dancing.

Special thanks to Tantallon's Energizer Bunnies Dee Dee Dorsey and Della Fleury for not only organizing the event, but also for pitching in to help to keep OYC organized as well!




undeterred. Jim Ball, Al Clevenger, and Tom Shank stood up for OYC, and after several close heats, Tom won, and possibly set a new PRYCA record by [s]lobbing a watermelon seed 26 feet, four inches.

The next event was absolutely fierce. The balloon toss lasted four heats, including one "do-over." Al Clevenger and Tom Shank won the first heat. However, the finish was deemed questionable by the judge, and a "do-over" was inevitable. This time, National Potomac claimed the win with an 18-foot toss. They also won the second heat with a 20-foot, 8-inch toss. Al and Tom came back in the third heat

Upcoming Events

|        |                                    |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| Dec 4  | PRYCA Board Meeting at SeafarersYC |
| Jan 20 | PRYCA Change of Watch              |



**Potomac River Yacht Clubs Association**  
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Address Correction Requested