



The Daymarker

OCCOQUAN YACHT CLUB

P.O. Box 469, Occoquan, VA 22125
Member: PRYCA, CBYCA Boat/U.S. Accord # GA80979Y

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Susan Von Schaack
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THE DAYMARKER Editor
Tom Coldwell
703 323-1675



Commodore's Comments

Teresa Sorrenti

The Plan's the thing! Some may call it boring, this planning stuff, but anyone who has been in any type of organization, much less a volunteer one, knows that without a plan you are up a creek without a paddle. Now at this time of year being on the water may sound inviting to a boater, but I do not think the creek is what you had in mind! Over 60 OYCers either 1) agree that planning is important; 2) had nothing better to do on a gray Saturday afternoon in January; or 3) were broke after Christmas and snacks courtesy of the club fit the bill. Regardless, we had a great turnout, with a lot of interest in the 1998 cruisin' season.

We started out missing coordinators for several events, but by the end of the afternoon I am happy to report that someone had volunteered for almost everything. And we

even added some new events to the agenda. The revision is displayed elsewhere in this issue, and we will have those great postcard size reminders for your refrigerator door ready by the March membership Meeting/St Patrick's Day Party, courtesy of the Balls.

One event is still somewhat tentative. Our great Halloween coordinator extraordinaire, Dottie Jacobsen, will be out of town the end of October and cannot handle the Membership Meeting/Halloween/Chili Contest/Photo

Contest/Dessert Contest. Whoever volunteers to replace her gets to determine a date and time. There was no clear opinion on whether to have the event on Saturday evening 10/31; Saturday afternoon, like the chili cook-off used to be; the Friday before (10/30); or the weekend before (10/24). I have to advise that we will not be able to attend the weekend before (I finally get to go to a high school reunion!), but that should not stop the program. If any one is willing to honcho this great event and sort out the scheduling, let us know!

There are a few new things about 1998. First, the "sign-up sheets" are just an indication of interest and will NOT reserve anyone a slip for an event.

We started out missing coordinators for several events, but by the end of the afternoon I am happy to report that someone had volunteered for almost everything. And we even added some new events to the agenda

Reservations are accepted after the article and reservation form appear in the Daymarker, and in the order the deposit checks are received. We had some bad feelings at some marinas on the river last year when we arrived with less than we booked, and we also had bad feelings in the club

when folks thought they were reserved. Hopefully this new system, plus deposits, will take care of both issues and keep boating fun.

A couple of new events this year are the March brunch, which started last year as a spur-of-the-moment event; a raft-up in DC for the July 4th fireworks; and a list of crews who are ready and willing to go on impromptu raft-ups, either on open weekends or when they were not signed up for a longer cruise. We are

trying to ensure there is a mix of long and short events to enable more participation, so please send in any suggestions.

I was also happy to see that we again have two volunteers for weeklongs next year, with Susan von Schaack and Eugene Brown planning one close to the Potomac in August and the Worcestersters looking farther afield in July. Some of the other cruises have switched locations in order to try to get as many participants as possible, so check out the list carefully!

I would like to thank a few people especially: our new Historian, Susan von Schaack for a great new Photo Board of 1997 memories; and Duane and Jan Jeirles, our new Quartermasters, who had a great set-up including the new OYC coffee mugs. The Quartermasters also took a show of hands vote on sweatshirts vs. sweaters (too bad everyone did not get to hear Carol Walsh explain to Gary how many styles of sweaters there are). Sweatshirts are winning, but if you have an opinion or any other ideas for OYC items or sources for items, please pass it on to Duane or Jan.

We had some announcements at the Planfest too. Two crews came to plan very important items: wedding dates! As good boaters, they are taking care not to conflict with any events even though they are making plans for dates during boating season. *Snarlin Marlin's* Bob Carmody and Jan Kegley are considering June 27, while John Ludwig and Sandy Mriscin of *Moonbeam* are looking at September 27 (word is they decided they had to after Sandy's birthday was listed in the Daymarker as Sandy Ludwig—such power Tom has!) Congratulations to all of you!

By the time you read this the PRYCA Change of Command will be over and our own Steve Donock will be the 1998 Commodore of the river, i.e., over all yacht clubs in the Potomac River Yacht Club Association; our IPC Steve Wexler will be the PRYCA Treasurer, and both Monica Lovell and Bonnie Breneman will be Members-at-Large. I think OYC should be proud that we have members willing to donate their time not only to our own club but also to PRYCA, where there is a lot of good work not just for parties and events but in monitoring legislative actions and other issues important to boating. Remember, the OYC delegate this year is Jim Ball.

Upcoming events in February (be sure to check other articles for details):

Saturday, February 7, Second Annual Sweetheart Dance (Burke)

February 12-16, Washington Boat Show (DC Convention Center) and the National Capital Boat Show (Chantilly)

Tuesday February 24, West Marine's OYC Fleet Night (Woodbridge store)

Sunday March 1, Second Annual Brunch at Fort Belvoir. See you there!

'98 Membership Dues are Due.

\$60 (family) check payable to OYC
Mail to OYC Membership Chair Jim Ball
6833 Spring Beauty Ct.
Springfield, VA 22152



Vice Commodore's Comments

Janine Washington

Falling in Love Again....Preparations for the OYC's 2nd Annual Sweetheart's Night are now underway. Your dedicated team of Love Bugs (Dottie Jacobsen, Peggy Ball, Linda Bozoky, Susan Cheatham, Susan von Schaak and myself) are working frantically to make sure everything's just perfect for you nautical lovers! By the way, Cupid, if you're reading this, we could all use new tennis bracelets. Just a thought.

The room has been booked, the D-J hired, the menus set, the music selected, the decorations....well, they're red. At last count, we have over forty OYCers confirmed. Or, do we have only the OYCers who are over forty?

Anyway, by the time this article goes to press it will be too late for all but the swiftest sweethearts to participate in this year's Sweetheart's Night. But, don't despair! There are plenty of upcoming OYC events to tickle your fancy. For example, the Balls will be coordinating an OYC Fleet Night at West Marine in Woodbridge. They'll be serving fun, refreshments and discounts! See Peggy's article for details.

At this year's OYC Planfest at Gecko's, some of you may have signed the sheet indicating your interest in spontaneous raft ups. Boy, do I have news for you! Mike Fordham of *Kitt* and Gary Linck of *Lovin' Life* are planning the first OYC Spontaneous Raft Up of '98 on *February 9* at Mattawoman. A flu vaccination certificate will be required for participation. You can call Mike Fordham for reservations. No phone calls after 6:00 p.m., please. I've asked the nurse to increase the dosage of his medication!

The Daymarker

Published monthly by the Occoquan Yacht Club
Tom Coldwell, PC, Editor
Mary Ann Coldwell, Editor's Editor
Jim Ball, Circulation

News and other materials for publication are welcome from any member of OYC. The deadline for submission of materials to **THE DAYMARKER** is the 20th of each month. (Attention cruise coordinators: Plan ahead and submit an article about your event in time to appear in *The Daymarker* the month before the event, earlier if necessary.) Stories, ideas and suggestions welcome from any one, really!

If possible, please submit copy by e-mail to:

coldwell@erols.com.

Fax service is not available. Word-processed copy may be mailed on a 3.5" IBM/MSDOS-compatible diskette to the editor at 10319 Commonwealth Blvd., Fairfax, VA 22032-2613. The preferred format is WordPerfect for Windows or DOS, but we accept Microsoft Word and ASCII text as well. By the 20th of the month.

Photographs may be submitted provided they comply with contemporary community standards for decency and do not reflect adversely on the club or its officers... unless it's a really good shot.

The editor may be reached by phone at home, 703-323-1675



Rear Commodore's Comments

Peggy Ball

Fleet Night Means Big Savings

OYC members have a great chance to save big bucks at a specially arranged "OYC Fleet Night" at West Marine in Woodbridge on Tuesday, February 24. Store manager Mac Almgren has agreed to wholesale prices for OYC members from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. that evening. Refreshments will be served.

OYCers are encouraged to come stock up on supplies for commissioning their boats. Wholesale prices mean up to 50% off of list prices (except for electronics), so start making your shopping list now. In some cases, quantity buys can reduce prices substantially, so if a bunch of us go together to buy paint brushes or bottom paint, for instance, the cost really goes down.



Put the date on your calendar, make your shopping list, and be there!



Secretary's Comments

Walt Cheatham

Impromptu raftups received a lot of attention at the last board meeting and at the Planfest Social last Saturday at Gecko's. While it seems the club's emphasis is on overnight weekend trips, week-longs, and even land events at FYC (and that is the case historically), your club wants to be more accommodating and supportive of the close-to-home and last-minute crowd. Hence this article to drum up interest and devise mechanisms to allow members to contact each other for a rendezvous at Mattawoman or Wades Bay or wherever on the spur of the moment.

Not being an avid rafter-upper myself (since, as Susan so often points out we have no generator), I am a strange person to be leading this charge. However, being the renegade board member than I am, and having previously supported (to no avail) on these pages the cause of short trips for newcomers to gain experience, make new friends, and thus enter the mainstream of overnight weekend trips and weeklongs, I am the perfect one to bring the matter of impromptu raftups before the avid readers of the Daymarker—even if I don't have a clue as to how to implement this venture.

One suggestion over cheese and dip last Saturday was for the club to adopt one of the more obscure VHF frequencies (certainly not the congested 68) as our unofficial hailing frequency so that we could call each other as we head out to the unknown to see who else is in a like state of not knowing where they are going or what they are about to do—or are already rafted up doing just that.

This prompted a discussion concerning why not simply

use Channel 16 to call the fictitious vessel "OYC Raft" which would be the secret signal for all rafters potential and actual to respond. Technical members like Jim Ball scoffed at this idea knowing that most members have dual watch VHF radios and have memorized their instructions just as they have their VCR machine instructions, and can monitor both channel 16 and "our" frequency.

Another idea flown by during the devouring of buffalo wings involved having membership man Ball keep a separate list of OYC cellular phone numbers so we could have a more private means of contacting each other as we head out. While this may have some merit, one member who has had more acts-of-God damage than anybody in the club quickly swallowed his meat ball and proffered that no one in the club actually keeps his cellular on—they just have it along in case a lightning strike or hurricane happens by.

Another member then said all we need is an asterisk by the name of everybody on the roster interested in rafting up so we can call each other at home the night before or the morning of. This drew a lot of laughter from the chips and dips crowd who knew for sure that nobody wanted to be called at home, and besides, that would be well before anybody made up his mind whether to even go to the boat or not.

So, membership of the OYC, I ask your suggestions. Send me an e-mail or snail mail and give me your ideas. I'll publish them all, and by spring we will have a workable method for listing In Search Of (ISO) requests and finding raftup matches.

Actually I hope it takes till late summer so I can fill this column with your suggestions over several months and not have to create more clever subjects and thoughtful articles in this space for quite a while.

Back by Popular Demand: Brunch at Fort Belvoir

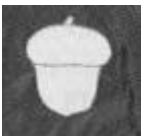
by Susan von Schaack-Brown
OYC Historian

Enjoyable company, superb food (until your belly busts!) and a view of the Potomac to make any boater's heart skip a beat are all in the very near future. Join the OYC Second Annual Brunch at The Fort Belvoir Officer's Club on Sunday, March 1st, at 11:00 a.m. The cost for the Unlimited Champagne Brunch is \$11.00/adult and \$5.50 for each child under the age of 12.

For the chocolate lovers, you can indulge in chocolate covered strawberries or one of the many other sweets at the dessert table. Omelettes, waffles and/or pancakes are made to order, carving station with Baron of Beef and Fresh Ham, and many other breakfast and lunch delicacies.

If you are interested in having a pre-boating season-experience-you'll-want-every-year, call Susan von Schaack-Brown of *Alexander's Dream* to RSVP, 339-6404, and leave a message of who and how many.

Please call by Monday, February 23, so reservations and the optimal table location can be arranged.



Treasurer's Comments

Tony Mirando

So you're buying a new boat

First of all, as with any large purchase, make sure you have thought it through carefully. Make sure that you can afford to make a financial commitment, for the size of the boat your interested in. Once the initial financial scare is worked through, then the fun begins.

As with Tom and me, we both sat down and figured out what our objectives and needs were, and what they could be in the future. For example, 1) we were interested in a boat that could sleep a certain number of people, you know, for when the friends drop in. 2) it had to be large enough to do long trips; you can't go to Florida in a dinghy. 3) it had to have certain options to fit our needs, such as we had to have a tub, just in case we needed to give one of our dogs a bath.

Other items that are important. Make sure you have a place to dock, and figure in the additional cost. Make sure your length and width of your new boat fits your slip, check your electric as well.

Once that is finished, you now know how much money you can spend and how much boat you need, this should help you in narrowing your search for a boat. This is when it gets to be a little confusing—there are so many different name brand of boats out there. I think one of the best places to see them all is the boat show (but don't bring the check book, like I did); or if you trust someone who is knowledgeable, ask them for help.

Once the brand name is chosen, you then need to go and search for a reputable dealer. Call anyone or everyone you can find that has your name brand and ask who they recommended. This is probably one of the more important decisions. You could be buying a good boat, but if the dealership stinks so will your deal. I know that buying a boat is like buying a used house, or a used or new car. Negotiate, negotiate, negotiate. There is a lot of mark up in boats, so don't be bashful with your offers. If the dealership has a lot full of boats, he is more apt to deal, but if the boat your interested in is hot (I mean popular, not stolen), then you may need to pay more for it. Shop around for a good price, then go to your dealership of choice and bargain from there.

If you are trading in your boat, check around first before excepting a trade in value, again they are going to low ball your trade. Be smart, take your time in the whole transaction. If you're not sure of what to do, don't sign anything and call someone who is knowledgeable to help, (I did). A good rule of thumb is, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Once you have settled on a boat and price, and you need to get financing, shop around. Getting financing is real easy, call around and find the best rate. Remembering, anyone's money will do. Rates can vary, so be careful. Again if you're not comfortable with this task, ask someone you trust for help. This applies to insurance on the boat as well.

The next step is a real important one. Make sure and be real careful that you inspect the boat for defects. I was very shocked at the quality of the whole boat industry. There are many things that can be improved on, and once you own your

boat, it is like pulling teeth to get your dealership to work on it. If you are a long time boat owner, this may not be important, otherwise get the boat professionally inspected, this helped me a lot, (thanks Rick, for that advice).

It is worth the money to hire a professional person to look the boat over for you, so that you have documentation to show the dealership if something is wrong. If you are pushy this will come in handy, but if not, you really must insist that all the work be done prior to delivery. You may need to make several trips to inspect the boat, for the completion of the items on your list. Make sure you take the boat out for another sea trial, if on the first one you discovered some problems.

It's now time to sign on the dotted line. Only sign what you understand, again if you are not sure or are nervous, bring a knowledgeable friend or an attorney. Better to be safe then sorry. Once the paper work is all done, then you should be provided with captain time, take it, even if you have experience. This will help you get acquainted with your new boat, and this should be provided at no charged to you by the dealership. I would also require that they give you a full tank of gas and a Coast Guard kit, but make sure this is in the original contract.

Your final chore is to join your local yacht club and I recommend OYC.

Northern Virginia Power Squadrons offer Boating Courses

OYC member Bill Fulford provided The Daymarker with the following schedule of boating courses being offered by Northern Virginia Power Squadrons:

February 5, (Thursday), McLean Community Center, McLean, VA. Contact: Bill Wright, (703) 437-7663 (h)

February 5, (Thursday), Arlington Community Center at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Arlington, VA. Contact: Bill Wright, (703) 437-7663 (h)

February 23, (Monday), Centreville High School, Clifton, VA. Contact: Rich Hayes, (703) 815-3851 (h), (703) 324-1700 (o)

February 24, (Tuesday), South Lakes High School, Reston, VA. Contact: Bill Wright, (703) 437-7663 (h)

March 10, (Tuesday), Kilmer Intermediate School, Vienna, VA. Contact: Bill Wright, (703) 437-7663 (h)

March 31, (Tuesday), Francis Scott Key Intermediate School, Springfield, VA. Contact: Gale Alls, (703) 569-1511 (h), (703) 820-1600 (o)

April 3, (Friday), Prince William County Government Center, Woodbridge, VA. Contact: Mike Foster, (703) 590-7126 (h), (202) 720-2747 (o)

April 21, (Tuesday), McLean Community Center, McLean, VA. Contact: Bill Wright, (703) 437-7663 (h)

For additional information: (703) 758-4442.

Occoquan Yacht Club 1997 Events & Coordinators

Save this schedule, but events are subject to change; consult future editions of *The Daymarker* for updates.

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| Feb 7 | Sweetheart's Night—Burke | Janine Washington, 590-3653 |
| Feb 12-16 | Washington Boat Show (DC Convention Center) <i>and</i> the National Capital Boat Show (Chantilly) | |
| Feb 24 | Fleet Night at West Marine, Woodbridge | Jim Ball, 569-2159 |
| Mar 1 | Brunch at Ft. Belvoir Officers Club | Susan Von Schaack, 339-6404 |
| Mar 14 | General Membership Meeting & St. Patricks Day Party—FYC | OYC Board |
| Apr 18-19 | Safety Day—Mount Vernon YC (Tentative) | Bonnie Breneman, 550-6023 |
| Apr 25-26 | Early Bird Cruise—Tantallon | Laslo Bozoky, 590-8440 |
| May 2-3 | OYC Flag Raising & Raft Up | OYC Board |
| May 16-17 | OYC Breakfast & Yard Sale PRYCA Blessing of The Fleet | Ray Steele, 385-8615 Jim Ball, 569-2159 |
| May 23-25 | Memorial Day Cruise—Coles Point | Rick Sorrenti, 590-6724 |
| Jun 6-7 | Spring Cruise—Cobb Island | Walt Cheatham, 491-3956 |
| Jun 13-14 | Tantallon Yacht Club Event | Dave Moore, 494-0651 |
| Jul 3-5 | Fourth of July Cruise—Pt. Lookout Fourth of July Raft Up | Rick Sorrenti, 590-6724, & Steve Wexler, 437-0687 John Ludwig, (301) 203-1609, & Rick Zimmerman, (301) 292-9893 |
| Jul ?? | OYC Week-Long Cruise I | Steve Worcester, 494-2383 |
| Jul 17-19 | PRYCA Float In—Ft. Washington | Jim Ball, 569-2159 |
| Aug ?? | OYC Week-Long Cruise II | Susan Von Schaack, 339-6404 |
| Aug 15-16 | Summer Cruise- Colonial Beach | Carol Walsh, 425-7699 |
| Aug 22-23 | Dinghy Regatta Raft Up | Marylynn Camden & Randy Snowman, (301) 869-2885 |
| Sep 5-7 | Labor Day Cruise—Yeocomico River | Steve Wexler, 437-0687, and Rick Sorrenti, 590-6724 |
| Sep 12-13 | Shrimp Feast—Mattawoman | Aaron Martin, 491-1287, & Mike Fordham, 590-3653 |
| Sep 18-20 | PRYCA End Of Summer Party | Jim Ball, 569-2159 |
| Oct 10-12 | Columbus Day Cruise | Jay Wilmeth, 698-9760 |
| Oct 15-18 | Annapolis Power Boat Show | |
| Oct ?? | Membership Meeting, Chili & Photo Contest & Halloween Party—FYC | OYC Board |
| Nov 7-8 | Hardy Souls Cruise—Alexandria | Mary Jo Worcester, 494-2383 |
| Nov 28 | Santa Cruise | Walt Cheatham, 491-3956 |
| Dec 5 | Holiday Party & Change of Watch | OYC Board |
| <i>Anytime</i> | Spontaneous Raft Ups, Parties, etc. | Coordinator? It could be you. |

Surfing the Web—Powerful Information Resource for Boaters

The Internet continues to grow in breadth as a powerful information resource (or wintertime distraction) for boaters. One of the best web sites around is offered by Boat/U.S. at <http://www.boatus.com>. In addition to an online boating course, the site includes a current and highly informative Daily Briefing. To encourage you Internet surfers to visit on your own, we offer a samples from recent Daily Briefings.



Tax Time Tip: Boats Still Qualify As Second Home Even though there were significant tax law changes this year, left intact were provisions dating back to 1986 that allow a boat to be considered a second home for tax purposes, if certain criteria are met. Under IRS rules, a boat is considered a “second home” if it has “basic living accommodations” including “sleeping space, cooking and toilet facilities.” (That’s as specific as IRS gets.) The boat loan must also be “secured”, which means the boat is held as collateral by the lender. On tax forms, a second home mortgage interest deduction should be entered on Schedule A, Itemized Deductions.

Industry Survey: How Does Your Marina Stack Up? The typical marina has 311 slips and 43 moorings available, charges \$120 a month for slip rental, overnight transient slips at \$1.00 per foot, \$1.58 a gallon for gas and \$1.26 a gallon for diesel fuel, according to a survey by Boating Industry magazine. About 60% have programs to control oil spills and offer oil recycling

Top Ten Reasons Why Boaters Need A Tow Fuel problems - out of gas, a faulty fuel pump - is the number one reason boaters need a tow, according to a review of service calls logged by TowBOAT/U.S., the nation's largest network of boat towing companies. Reason number two is a dead battery, followed by engine overheating, hitting a submerged object, grounding, transmission problems, electrical failure, engine breakdown, outdrive failure and lost or fouled prop.

Plan Now For Safe Boating Week, May 16-22 If you belong to a boating group or club that would like to participate in local National Safe Boating Week activities, now's the time to start planning for this year's observance. The theme this year is “Boat Smart From the Start” with an emphasis on life jackets. To get a media kit with ideas for local events, contact the National Safe Boating Council.

Hoax Calls Cost Coast Guard and Ultimately, Us According to Coast Guard statistics, the Coast Guard responds to about 400 hoax mayday calls annually, at a cost of over \$500,000 a year to the taxpayer. The Coast Guard has a toll free number for reporting suspected hoax distress calls: 1-800-2NO-HOAX (1-800-266-4629). All calls are confidential and callers can remain anonymous. If convicted, people who place phony distress calls face prison time, fines and restitution to the Coast Guard.

El Nino Advisory AvailableThe [current] El Nino Advisory issued by NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is available at

<http://www.elnino.noaa.gov>. [December's] advisory indicates strong El Nino conditions are expected to continue through May, 1998 and then begin to weaken.

Legislature to Consider Personal Watercraft Bills

Proposed regulations governing the use of personal watercraft are likely to be a key issue before the Virginia General Assembly in January. A state committee has recommended PWC restrictions including a minimum operating age of 16 and the requirement that youthful operators pass a safety course. One legislator also plans to introduce a bill that would put any watercraft violations on motor vehicle driving records.

Pumpout Stations Proliferating The 49 US states and territories participating in the Clean Vessel Act federal grant program have installed over 2,700 pumpout and dump stations since 1993. The CVA has distributed over \$37 million to the states and territories, which have in turn provided grants to private as well as public marinas. On average, 30% of the grants have gone to public or government run facilities and 70% to private operations. 83% of the grants went to facilities on coastal waters and 17% to inland waters.

Prop Shops Embrace Certification Program A propeller shop certification program is slowly winning industry acceptance, according to a story in the December issue of Soundings-Trade Only magazine. The three-year-old program sponsored by the National Marine Propeller Association (NMPA) got a big boost this fall when the prop division of Mercury Marine endorsed NMPA certification for its authorized repair shops. The certification program includes a written exam and an evaluation of a shop's actual repair of a damaged propeller.

Congress Approves More Funds For Nautical Charts In the final hours of the first session of the 105th Congress, lawmakers approved a \$6 million increase, to \$44 million, for nautical mapping and charting in fiscal year 1998. NOAA was also directed to provide Congress with a long term plan by February 1, 1998 “to meet the Nation's nautical charting needs.”

Are You A “Typical” Boater? According to a survey by the National Marine Manufacturers Association, today's “average” boater is 48 years of age, married, has a household income of \$71,000, and 37 percent have children 18 years old and younger living at home. First-time boating experiences for most owners started between the ages of 10 and 14 years old. About half started boating with parents, one-third were introduced by friends and the balance by other relatives. Recent buyers have had on-water experience for 28 years.

Check this out and more at <http://www.boatus.com>.

Boat Slips for Sale or Rent.

Fairfax Yacht Club—40' slip on D-Dock for rent, available in March timeframe. Call Monica Lovell, (703) 799-1322 (h), (202) 338-2172 (w).

Fairfax Yacht Club—two 40' slips for sale, one open, one covered. Discount to OYC members. Please call Richard Ziegler, (703) 590-4630.

Is Your Boat Firesafe?

by Jim Ball

All, well most, of the OYCers I know are very safe boaters, but every year, fires and explosions injure hundreds of boaters and bystanders and cause millions of dollars damage. Because a gasoline engine power boat is actually a floating bomb, everyone who owns and operates one needs to be constantly aware of the danger involved. Keeping your boat firesafe for you, your family, and your friends should always be on your mind. Now that winter is here, there are opportunities to take a fresh, unhurried look at things to make sure your boat is firesafe in the new year.

Fuel and fuel vapors are the principal ingredients in all boating accidents involving fires and explosions. If you are constantly concerned about keeping fuel and vapors contained, you will be a safer boater.

If you can get to your boat over the winter, it is a good time to look carefully for damage to your boat's fuel system. Over time, fuel and fuel hoses wear out. Inspect these fittings and hoses regularly, especially near the engine where engine heat and vibration can accelerate deterioration. Fuel lines should have a marking on them that indicates they are coast guard approved for fuel. Follow the lines all the way from tank to engine and generator to make sure that they are not chaffing on a sharp surface anywhere. If you find a rubbed spot, best replace the line. Fuel fill hoses that are dry and cracked or soft and mushy should be replaced immediately. If you do it yourself, make sure you know precautions to take. Fuel system maintenance is not for amateurs.

You should carefully inspect your fuel tanks each year. Pay particular attention to bottom surfaces which may have been in contact with bilge water. Check to see if any part of the tank could have rusted or been damaged due to vibration, rubbing, or abrasion. Permanently installed fuel tanks and closed compartments that contain engine or fuel tanks must be vented to the outside. Be sure the fuel fill pipe is securely mounted, grounded, and located where spilled fuel would be directed overboard. If a hose or fuel tank is leaking, turn off all electrical power and replace the leaking item.

Remember to use only marine-rated parts for repairs. Make sure your blower(s) are operating and that they are exhausting overboard by feeling for the exhaust. This summer I found several boats with one blower not working or not hooked up to an exhaust hose.

Be sure that any heating and cooking appliances on board are secured and operate properly. Refer to the appliance owner's manual for guidance on inspecting for leaks in valves and connections. I know I shouldn't have to say this, Ned, but NEVER USE A MATCH TO CHECK

FOR LEAKS. Make sure flammable items are stowed safely and cannot come into contact with cooking or heating appliances or hot engine parts.

Check to see that your fire extinguishers are Coast Guard approved and in working order—that gauges register and nozzles are clear. Have you tapped the fire extinguishers lately to make sure the contents aren't caked? Take a boating safety course, or come to the PRYCA Safety Day in the Spring and learn the correct use of a fire extinguisher aboard a boat.

Finally, check your wiring and repair any bare wires and loose electrical connections that could cause a short in your boat's electrical system, which could start a fire. If, by any chance, you have any AC wiring in your engine compartment (electrical outlets, switches, or lights) make sure they are explosion proof. Do not store disposable propane cylinders or charcoal lighting fluid on board.

For those of you who are good boys and girls, you know a lot of this stuff because you have had a Coast Guard Auxiliary Courtesy Marine Exam, and in many cases you have permitted me to embarrass you, ...ahh .. I mean... inspect your boat to find all these pesky little problems. Remember, it will soon be a new year and time to have another CME, so call on me early to get your 1998 CME completed. [Jim can be reached at 569-2159-Ed.]

The Datemarkers

February Anniversary Dates

Jud and Nancy Bireley, 4

Joe Grosson and Roxana McCarter, 13

Jim and Carol Henry, 26

February Birthday Dates

Robert Bennett, 1

Jackie Michaud, 1

Vaneeda Bennett, 3

Sam Raines, 5

George Siebert, 7

Rick Sorrenti, 9

Twyla Lytle, 10

Frank Schwartz, 24

It's cold, when the temperature is...

60 Californians put on sweaters (if they can find one).

50 Miami residents turn on the heat.

45 New Hampshire residents go to outdoor concerts.

40 Californians shiver uncontrollably; Minnesotans go swimming.

25 Californians weep pitifully; Minnesotans eat ice cream; Canadians go swimming.

20 Miamians vacation further south.

15 Cat insists on sleeping in your bed with you.

0 Alaskans put on T-Shirts.

-20 Cat insists on sleeping in pajamas with you

-25 Too cold to think; You need jumper cables to get the driver going.

-30 You plan a two week hot bath

-40 Minnesotans button top button; Canadians put on sweaters

-50 Congressional hot air freezes; Alaskans close the bathroom window.

-80 Green Bay Packer fans order hot cocoa at the game.



Occoquan Yacht Club
P.O. Box 469
Occoquan, VA 22125

Address Correction Requested

**IF there's an asterisk (*) on your mailing label, WHAT!
You haven't renewed yet? Sure, it's cold, rainy
and dark... and boating's the farthest thing from
your mind, but how are you explaining that
asterisk to your postman? Please send your
check today and he'll take back what he's
telling your neighbors.**

Inside: 1998 schedule and membership roster insert..

Contemplating a romantic evening...

Making sure your old flame isn't your boat...

Goodies from West Marine and Boat/U.S. ...

Secretary Walt pushes rattups.

**March 14
General Membership
Meeting & Party**

**March 1
2nd Annual Brunch
at Fort Belvoir
Susan Brown, 339-6404**

**March 1
Capital Expo Center,
Chantilly, VA
Center;**

**February 12-16
Two Boat Shows:
DC Convention
Center;**

**February 7
6:00 p.m.
Sweetheart's Night
Oak Community
Center,
Burke, VA**