



THE HARBOR LIGHT



America's Boating Club of Greenwich - District 2

[Our website](#)

Volume 89 No. 45 NEWSLETTER December 2022



Happy Holidays! Happy Winter!

I hope this message finds you comfortable in your home, with your vessel on the hard, and you sitting by the fire perusing nautical catalogs, patiently waiting for Spring and the beginning of a new boating season. I am happy to announce 25 members of our Squadron have been awarded Merit Marks for their volunteer service this past 12 months. Any organization is only as strong as its volunteers, and we have a strong cadre of members with talents and energy to maintain our fine reputation in the boating community.

Your Executive Committee continues to work hard to put together fun and memorable programs on a monthly basis. Here is a way you as a member can help our Club continue to thrive. We are formalizing the process (speaker's bureau) and all ExCom members are reaching out to friends and neighbors who with a little encouragement are candidates to become our featured speaker at a monthly meeting. For example, we are finalizing plans for a noted academic to tell us about his 30-year effort to cultivate seaweed as a source of food and fuel. Do you know someone with similar nautical related expertise? I am guessing you do know someone, at least to start the conversation. Our members have some good stories to tell—contact GreenwichSquadron@gmail.com with your ideas and we will help with any PowerPoint presentations or other visual aids to make it happen.

Our next event is the traditional Holiday Party Friday December 16th. This year we are going all out—our venue is the historic Field Club located at 276 Lake Avenue in Greenwich. We will enjoy a cocktail hour and sit down dinner served by their staff. This is an opportunity to see old friends and maybe make some new friends

in the boating community. We still have have room for a few more guests and ask you to RSVP by Saturday December 10th to GreenwichSquadron@gmail.com so the Field Club knows how many meals to prepare. Guaranteed a good time will be had by all.

My Flag Officer Terry Henry and I wish you and your family a Happy Holiday Season, and a most Happy and Healthy New Year.

Commander Bob Henry

Report from the Educational Officer

Electronic Navigation

As announced several years ago, the U.S. Office of Coast Survey, a part of NOAA and the nation's chart scrivener, intends to cease producing paper nautical charts by 2025. This date is rapidly approaching. Some have speculated that this change is not really going to happen. (Does anyone remember the government's promise to switch to the metric system?) However, there are too many advantages of electronic charts for this transition not to occur. In addition to many cost savings, electronic charts are more durable and charts of all U.S. navigable waters can fit on a thumb drive the size of a small key chain.

So, the question is: Are you ready? If not, you should enroll in our upcoming Essential Navigation course. In this course you will learn, among other skills, how to:

- Download, install, and use free electronic navigation software (Open CPN) and NOAA raster (electronic equivalent of paper) charts.
- Use electronic navigation applications available for smart phones and tablets.
- Transfer routes and waypoints from your computer to a tablet or onboard chartplotter.

If these skills and concepts seem foreign, this course is for you.

The course begins Tuesday, January 31 and runs for 8 weeks. The course is designed to teach you what you need to know without time consuming homework and exams.

Submitted by Andy Cummings, JN

Report from the Safety Officer

Fatal Boating Accidents are Up in Connecticut

In 2020, the number of boating accidents nationally reversed a steady decline. From 2019 to 2020, boating accidents were up 26.3% with fatal accidents up 25.1%. The experience in Connecticut was consistent with the national data. In Connecticut, from 2019 to 2020, boating accidents were up 35%, increasing from 40 to 54. During this same time, fatal accidents increased in Connecticut from 2 to 3, technically a 50% increase (but the numbers are relatively small to begin with).

This unfavorable national trend reversed from 2020 to 2021 with boating accidents declining by 15.7% and fatal accidents declining by 13%. During the same time total boating accidents decreased in Connecticut by 20.4% (from 54 to 43). However, fatal accidents in Connecticut were up significantly from 3 to 7.

So, what is the reason for these increases? The BoatU.S. Foundation notes a "correlation" between the 2020 uptick and boat sales. New boat sales increased in 2020 by 13%. Perhaps more significantly, the percentage of boat purchases by first time boat owners jumped to 35% in 2020. First time boat owners presumably have less training and experience. As Coast Guard accident statistics show, 77% of fatal accidents involve operators with no formal boating education. I note that in Connecticut, the number of registered boats increased from 2020 to 2021 by 6.7%.

While Connecticut requires boating education, there is a glaring exemption from the Safe Boating Certificate requirement for operators of newly registered boats for a period of 3 months from registration, effectively most of a boating season. This is a well-meaning boost to the boat sales industry. However, accident data suggest that no one should be relying upon this exemption. Anyone planning to acquire a boat for the 2023 season has ample time now to obtain a Safe Boating Certificate.

Our one day safe boating course is Saturday, March 11, 2023.

The study provides no insights into the reasons for the modest positive trends. Education and public awareness may have an impact. Also, as Power Squadron members we hopefully can improve the trend by setting a positive example.

Submitted by Andy Cummings, JN

Explanation of the Photos

In November, we had a blockbuster of an event. Jonathan Asch talked about the Vineyard Race from the point of view of the geography, organization as well as taking part. As an erstwhile harbor master himself before his presentation, Jonathan introduced our new harbor master Paul Cappiali.

The subject attracted many fine racing sailors in our community - and introduced many of our members to this world class event held every summer.

Our Sail class has ended, and the photo shows instructor Captain Len Lipton at the whiteboard. Almost 20 students with a variety of experience enjoyed learning from one of the best,

As we rebranded to America's Boating Club, it was time to change the signs the Town had allowed us to put up at the Town docks. The photo shows the one at Greenwich Point. Great publicity!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Watch your inbox for details or contact GreenwichSquadron@gmail.com

January 18 7pm YWCA 259 East Putnam, Greenwich. Darien Sail and Power Squadron co-hosts this event with America's Boating Club of Greenwich. Author Erik Hesselberg talks about Night Boats to New York;

Steamboats from the Connecticut River to New York' Our usual light refreshments will be served.

January 31st Essential Navigation course begins. Register [HERE](#)

March 3 Change of Watch - Venue tbd

March 11th One Day Safe Boating Class Register [HERE](#)

What's that Unmarked Buoy in Captain Harbor?



A deadly sea catastrophe occurred in 1931. 16 of a crew of 24 lost their lives when the *Thames*, better known as the "Sugarboat," so named for its sweet cargo, erupted into flames off Great Captains Island. It eventually came to rest about 100 yards off the western tip of Greenwich Point.

While the incident happened so close to Tod's Point and the house owned by banker J. Kennedy Tod, there were no lights on there at night. The surviving crew didn't realize they were so close to land and so swam to Captain's Island.

Today a buoy marks the spot where the Sugarboat came to rest to warn mariners of possible danger if they run over what is left of it. Local sailors also know of the rocks between the buoy and shore.

Little of the ship remains. Even eight or ten years ago, some of the bow would come above the water at low tide, but now none of it can be seen at any time. Some of the superstructure might still remain right below, although we know that during the Second World War much was salvaged.

During the desperate days of World War II, demand for raw materials was foremost in the minds of Allied war planners, as many sources of those materials had been captured by the Axis powers. Metal was salvaged wherever it could be found to build more ships, tanks and airplanes for the war effort. That salvage operation included the Sugarboat.

Submitted by Susan Ryan JN





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