

Wildoats Marine Service, LLC
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The Hammock

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From the Editor

As I sit here watching the sun set on the Thames River and trying to thaw out, I drift back to six months ago when the same sun was setting much later and I was warm. Oh well, soon it will be hot and humid and I'll be dreaming of winter. Most of the periodicals coming in have articles about winter storage and visiting your boat. I can't agree with them more; I have found so many things that I could do during a short visit to the boat and the mental therapy is good. More on winter projects later in the newsletter. We received some positive feedback on the inaugural newsletter, and we're very pleased that you all enjoy it. If you have any suggestions please let us know. So stay warm, be safe, but most of all HAVE FUN!

Communications – “The VHF Radio”

The use of radios has come a long way since I first started boating. The New London Marine Operator (CH26) has long since retired and CB radios and their respective lingo have been replaced by cell phones. Cell phones have their place onboard but your VHF radio is more effective in an emergency situation on the water. Channel 16 is assigned for emergency communication with the USCG and should not be used for normal traffic. In this region channel 9 is the hailing channel, and channel 13 is for communication with bridges and

commercial traffic. In my years of cruising the east coast and islands, I have found that those big ferries and tankers appreciate a call letting them know your intentions. It may seem silly to you but put yourself on the bridge of that tanker trying to enter New London harbor on a Sunday!!

New VHF radios have a multitude of options available on them including that little red button that says “distress.” Hopefully this button is properly installed and you are registered with the USCG. First, you must receive a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number. This number identifies you to the USCG and provides all the info they need. If the radio is interfaced with your GPS it will automatically transmit a MAYDAY giving your latitude and longitude. It will continue to transmit until shutoff. This can be especially helpful if you are sailing shorthanded or with a crew unfamiliar with radio operation. It will allow you to attend to the problem or injured crew without the worries of having to also work the radio. Please check your radio to ensure it is properly interfaced. If your radio does not have this capability I recommend you place

QUIZ TIME

1. What does a red over green light configuration represent?
2. What does a day shape of two black vertical balls indicate?

3. According to the Navigation Rules what does Rule 8 state?

Communications continued

a small emergency communication guideline next to the radio so a non-boater can communicate with emergency personnel.

Winter Tips

OK, let's assume you haven't been to the boat lately. Here are a few winter boat issues to check out:

Jackstands – with the freeze/thaw/freeze the stands can become loose and provide no support to the boat. Also with the heavy winds of winter the mast can rock the boat. Don't trust the yard guys to check them, some could care less. Check to see that the hull is not "oil canning" or taking on a shape that is not normal.

Batteries – A fully charged battery will not freeze during the winter months. It should be checked and charge if needed. DO NOT charge a frozen battery.

Take a walk – Walk around your boat checking to see if there is any damage or potential for damage. I once had a client who visited his boat weekly, but never walked around it, came spring he found serious damage on the opposite side caused by his neighbor's frozen winter cover gallon jug slapping against his hull! Check that all the winter plugs (those rags we install in the seacocks/drains) are still in place.

In water – If you stored your boat in the water it is imperative that you visit the boat at least weekly if not more. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of checking the outside for ice against the hull; and bilges for possible leaks and operational bilge pumps. A small amount of frozen water around an auto float switch can sink you boat.

Bottom Preparation - Consider sanding your bottom now before the yard gets busy. It will facilitate painting in the spring when we are busy with temperature sensitive repairs and have unsettled weather.

One Particular Harbor

Let's leave the US harbors and go east. Hopetown, Elbow Key, Abacos is another favorite. This harbor is protected 360 with lots of room to anchor or picking up a mooring. Hopetown offers a few small stores and restaurants and the islanders are friendly, helpful and a pleasure to meet. Cross over the island (about 300 yards) and you're again on beautiful beaches with the Atlantic Ocean right in front of you. If you're looking for a quiet get-away and don't have a boat try the Harborview Hotel. Hopetown is famous for its red and white striped lighthouse.

Quiz Answers:

1. Red over green is a sailboat under sail.
2. The ship is not under command or restricted in its ability to maneuver. Again not a good thing!
3. Rule 8 of the Navigation Rules deals with "Action to Avoid Collision". An excellent rule to read since we are faced with avoidance regularly when we are out on the water.

Philosophy

Our philosophy is that yacht ownership should be fun! It is often the little things that can make the difference between fun and another "dreaded weekend" on the boat. We offer a range of services at reasonable rates. We provide pre & post purchase consulting, documentation/registration services, seamanship lessons and general maintenance. *Wildoats Marine Service LLC* is fully insured and ready to provide you with the finest service. With our contacts in the marine industry we can provide you with a reference to a reliable expert/technician whom we trust to meet your demands.

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Coming Soon – Our new website
www.wildoatsmarine.com