RIVER PILOT

From Commander Vlad
2020 Special Boating Season

The boating summer comes to the end. However, we still have fine weather for activities on the water. This season is special because due to the Covid 19 imposed restrictions we could not fully enjoy it. Many marina’s offices are closed and usual boating rendezvous canceled. Same with club’s group sailings and races. America’s Boating Club made special recommendations for social distancing for boaters (https://americasboatingchannel.com/ "Social Distancing for Boaters").

Among them:
- Limit passengers on board of your vessel to family members living in the same household;
- Maintain safe distance on the launch ramp (stay at least 6 ft apart from other people);

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America’s Boating Club® is a trademark of the United States power Squadrons®.
- Wear a face mask;
- Use protective gloves when touching marine gates, fuel and discharge pumps, other equipment and lines (that other people might touch). Frequently wash your hands. Use sanitizers;
- Avoid docking close to other boats;
- Limit use of marina's restaurants. Bring food from home;
- Do not go boating if someone in your household is sick;
- Keep a safe distance from other watercrafts, especially in crowded areas.

experienced all these inconveniences in Antioch, where my “Baby Horse” (Yankee-30 sailboat) is docking.

Almost all the time boats are not leaving the dock. A rare boat sails in the distance.

But there are crowded areas (near beaches), where you can see a lot of watercrafts (kite and wind surfers, motor and sailboats).

Rules for “Social Distancing” weren't always maintained.

But maybe these seals are from the same household.

The sailing season continues...
Sacramento Power Squadron

Virtual Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, Sept 16 2020, 5:30 PM

Vlad - Calls meeting to order;

Pledge of allegiance to the Flag;

Commander Report - Vlad;
4. Renaming Sacramento Power Squadron to “America’s Boating Club of Greater Sacramento” (Business name).

Secretary Report and Announcements - Judy;
Should we think about investing some money in advertising a virtual safe boating class. (member ideas for best places to advertise).

Treasury Report – Seth;

SEO and Assistant SEO Reports - Jim & Sid. New ABC students. Online and virtual classes.

Vessel Safety Check Inspector Report – Russ;

Information Technology and Webmaster Contacts Report – Jim;

Newsletter Chairman Report – Heinz;

Committees Report;

Open Discussion – All Members;

Adjournment.
“KNOW BOATING BASICS” reminders (1-3 rules extracts in each issue).

RULES OF THE ROAD (COLREG).

Sound and Light Signals.  *Maneuvering and Warning. Rule 34*

1) When vessels are in sight of one another, a power-driven vessel underway shall indicate the maneuver by the following signals on her whistle:
   - one short blast to mean “I am altering my course to starboard”
   - two short blasts to mean “I am altering my course to port”
   - three short blasts to mean “I am operating astern propulsion”.

Any vessel may supplement the whistle signals of this Rule by light signals, repeated as appropriate, whilst the

![Diagram of maneuvering signals](image)

The duration of each flash shall be about one second, the interval between flashes shall be about one second, and the interval between successive signals shall be not less than ten seconds.

2) When in sight of one another in a narrow channel or fairway;

   A vessel intending to overtake shall indicate her intention by the following signals on her whistle:
   - two prolonged blasts followed by one short blast to mean “I intend to overtake you on starboard side”
   - two prolonged blasts followed by two short blasts to mean “I intend to overtake you on port side”

![Diagram of overtake signals](image)
3) When vessels in sight of one another are approaching each other and from any cause either vessel fails to understand the intentions or actions of the other, or is in doubt whether sufficient action is being taken by the other, the vessel in doubt shall immediately indicate such doubt by giving at least five short and rapid blasts on the

**Danger signal:** at least FIVE short rapid blasts
Sound if in doubt about the other vessel’s intentions

4) A vessel nearing a bend or an area of a channel or fairway where other vessels may be obscured by an intervening obstruction shall sound one prolonged blast. Such signal shall be answered with a prolonged blast by any approaching vessel that may be within hearing around the bend or behind the intervening obstruction.
COVID restrictions have kept many of our favorite destinations closed. However, judging by the number of folks on the water, you wouldn’t know it. Some folks back out on the water seem to have forgotten some of the basics like wakes, stern platform riding, bow riding, safe passing etc. There were several incidents that I witnessed directly.

The first is when we were being overtaken on the river. Many of the “upper parts” of the river can be considered narrow waterways. Operating in narrow waterways brings issues not found on larger waterways like San Francisco Bay. When operating in narrow waterways, passing becomes a bit more challenging. Keep in mind that at the end of the day, all operators are responsible to take actions that would prevent a dangerous situation. Having said that, Donna, a “skipper in training” was at the helm and I was the lookout. We were in an area of the river that is somewhat narrow as in not a lot of area for big boats to maneuver easily. She was in the river to the right of center when I spotted a boat approaching at some distance from the stern. I was assuming that they were not going to change their speed and the boat was putting out a large wake. In open areas and being the stand on vessel (I have the right of way) and noticing the vessel was making an indication of a starboard pass, I decided that the distance between my vessel and the shore would not allow this to happen safely. I looked ahead and seeing no approaching vessels, observed that the vessel was in no way close aboard, had Donna pull to the starboard in such a manner as to clearly signal our intentions and to allow the approaching vessel plenty of time and space to safely pass to port. This would allow us to change direction and head into the wake reducing the wake effect. The vessel did change course but instead of swinging wide, chose to pass so close that we did not have enough time to hit the wake at a “reducing angle of attack” and pretty much took the full force of the wake. I have copied the below statement from “sacdelta.com/safety/rules”. Note that the approaching vessel did not use horn signals nor did they contact us on the VHF (we were monitoring 16 as usual).

“When Being Overtaken: Be ready for trouble when a power boat passes you in a narrow waterway. As the lead boat, which always has the right of way, stay on your side of the channel and maintain a steady speed so that the overtaking vessel can pass you safely. Use your radio to discuss this with the passing boat.”

The good news is that although we were waked pretty hard, the boat handled it ok and there was no damage in fact it was some great training on how to take a close in wake.

That same vessel went past a dock that had two jet skis tied up to it. They did not slow down and slammed the dock and the vessels tied up to it and yes, jet skis are considered a “boat”. Below is an excerpt from the same source as below:

“Speed Limits

Speed is restricted in many areas of the Delta. Most speed zones are marked by signs showing an orange circle around a black numeral. State law restricts speed to (and enforces) 5 miles per hour when passing landing floats to which boats are made fast or which are being used for the embarkation or discharge of passengers. Some local ordinances restrict speed to 5 miles per hour when passing ferries.

Speed is limited by law for certain conditions and areas. The maximum speed for motorboats within 100 feet of a bather (but not a water skier) and within 200 feet of a bathing beach, swimming float, diving platform or life line, passenger landing being used, or landing where boats are tied up is five miles per hour.

A safe speed should be maintained at all times so that: a) action can be taken to avoid collision and b) the boat can stop within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.”

The wake problem was addressed in my last article where one of our shipmates roared past a marina and caused significant issues. Please be aware of your wake and responsibilities when out on the water.
The second thing I observed was at the cruise in last weekend. A boat was sterning in at Moore’s and there was a young woman on the stern platform ready to jump off and assist with tying up the vessel. The vessel had canvas that went over the top of the transom so there were no hand holds, not that it would have been any safer to do so. I stood there and watched as the vessel crossed over a shallow area hoping that they didn’t suddenly run aground tossing the person into the water and then back over her. What’s the possibility of that happening you might ask and the answer would be more often than you would think. I have seen the results of a person hit by a propeller and it looks more like a cross between great white shark attack and a maniac with a chain saw. Certainly, it would have ripped her up pretty well. She didn’t even have a life jacket on. What’s the chance of someone going off the back of the boat you ask, and the answer is again more than you would think. My late wife and I were backing boats into the guest dock at SYC. Work was being done so we had to move a few boats around. I was piloting a Mainship which has a rear door that doubles as a set of boarding stairs. The last person that used the door did not latch it. As we sterned, Christie was tossing lines to the folks on the dock. When she got to the starboard side and went to toss the line, she leaned against the door which immediately opened like a gallows trap door and she went off the back and into the water just behind the boat and between the boat and the dock. Several things prevented injury: she was wearing an inflatable life jacket which almost immediately inflated allowing Gil Gonzales to pluck her out of the water like the average person yanks a tea bag out of a cup. The boat was in neutral so the props were not turning. All in all, luck was with us, but do you want to trust your survival to luck and don’t forget, she was standing in the cockpit and not on the swim platform. Bottom line: wear a life jacket, don’t stand on the stern platform, remember “one hand for you and one for the ship” in other words, hold on to something especially while docking.

The third thing was I was helping several “nonmember” boats into the dock. One of the boats, a beautiful “go fast” was coming in. It looked brand new which I was later told it was. They didn’t have fenders or lines specific for the boat so the captain had his first mate using her legs as fenders. I cringed inside at the thought of those beautiful legs twisted and broken should he misjudge the speed or distance to the dock. This is the number two rule just after “don’t stand on the stern platform while docking”. I didn’t say anything because....well I didn’t want to once again be a “Debbie downer”. Fortunately, everything worked out so all good...right? Well, they had to move the boat several more times and each time she was on the bow fending off with her legs. Finally, it just came out of my mouth “gee....those are sure pretty legs...I would hate to see them all smashed and bleeding... please don’t fend off your boat with body parts”. The skipper replied “it’s a brand new boat and she’s protecting it” to which I replied “better a big yard bill than a bigger prosthetics bill for new legs!”. He agreed so I went back to what I was doing. Several hours later, as they were leaving and going close aboard to several boats, the first mate with the fabulous legs was once again fending off with them. Please folks, don’t use body parts when fending off your boat. A quick physics formula would show that your boat or boat fender can withstand more force than a leg or arm. Everyone does it from time to time but if you do, make sure it’s a “glancing” push and not something you could get caught in between the boat and anything.

Please folks, be careful out there. The latest US Coast Guard statistics show nationwide death rates over last year are up by 25%. This says that folks just aren’t paying attention or taking chances they shouldn’t. Things can happen so fast you might not see it coming. Plan for the worst and hope for the best. Better to be happy that the worst didn’t happen then someone standing there saying “I told you so”.
Cruising on the Sacramento River and the American River by Judy Hust

If you have cruised the Sacramento River on the weekend this summer you will know that it is packed with boats Friday through Sunday. It’s almost like bumper cars because people are not paying attention, they don’t seem to know what side to pass on, how to observe 5 mile limits, and forget boating etiquette except for a few boats it doesn’t exist. Welcome to the “wild, wild west”. There must be a lot of new boaters who have never had any safety classes or training. Perhaps this is because of Covid 19 since this is still one hobby where you can easily distance yourself from other people. We were out on the River last weekend and it was packed then we went out again on Wednesday and there were only few boats on the river, it was great. Below and on the following pages are some pictures from Wed 9/2.

Figure 1 Tower Bridge

Figure 2 Old Sacramento

Figure 3 New Dock on West Sacramento side of the River set to open in November
One big change on the River is a new dock on the West Sacramento side right across from Old Sacramento. There is about 300 feet of dock space and it is scheduled to open in November. This will be great for closer access by boat to the River Cats games when they start playing again. Also good for those who want to stretch their legs and take a stroll down the beautiful River Walk in front of the Pyramid (Ziggurat) Building and along the beautiful park area.

![New dock](image)

Figure 4 New dock

As we cruised up river we passed the iconic Virgin Sturgeon pictured below (funky but good eats). They do have outdoor dining and we have eaten there many times. The Virgin Sturgeon has been around for at least 40 years I went there with friends when I was in my late 20's.

![Virgin Sturgeon](image)
On our way back going down river we passed this deadhead in the river in front of the Riverview Marina if you hit this it might be bye, bye boat.

On to the American River the perfect place to stop for lunch. The speed is 5 mph and it is very relaxing. A perfect way to end an afternoon on the River.
It's a hundred degrees out and the grandkids are dying to go for a swim. Tragically, that could be just the outcome if they jump into water at your marina. According to researchers, over 20 deaths have recently been attributed to electric shock drownings - all of them occurring in fresh water marinas leaking stray alternating current into the water.

Electric shock drowning? How come I've never heard of that, you say. Well, until recently, most electric shock drownings were attributed to regular drownings because electric shock drowning leaves no distinctive post-mortem indicators. Only when multiple drownings have occurred in the same marina, or unexplained marina drownings of experienced swimmers, does electric shock drowning even leave a clue. In one tragic case a dog owner became paralyzed when attempting to rescue a dog in a "hot marina." The owner's husband then attempted to rescue his wife and dog. A second dog then entered the water thinking he was joining in the fun. All four died.

Electric shock drowning results when even small stray currents of less than 10 milli amps (1/100 of an amp) causes paralysis. These stray currents, which are commonly referred to as "ground faults", are caused by electrical code violations on docks and non-compliance with American Boat And Yacht Council standards on vessels.

Ground faults can occur when:
1) current carrying wires make direct contact with the water,
2) when any portion of a faulty power cord falls into the water, or
3) when neutral (white) wires are connected to grounding (green) wires anywhere on the dock or on a vessel.