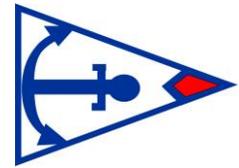




The Bitter End

Editor: Bill Reynolds AP



February 2015

Newmarket Power & Sail Squadron
P.O. Box 93090 1111 Davis Drive
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 8K3

Web Site: www.cps-ecp.ca/newmarket
E-mail: npsinfo@mailonly.ca

From the Bridge...

As I write this editorial, we are in a deep freeze. Up in beautiful downtown Barrie, we have lots of snow and ice. At least the groundhog didn't see his shadow!

I visited the boat last month and had to break up the frozen crust of icy snow on the tarp before it gave up its grip and slid off to the ground. Everything was fine though. The high winds have not torn the tarp to pieces (yet) and within the next 50 days I will be opening everything up in preparation for spring maintenance.

The Toronto Boat Show provided a nice break in my winter blahs. I met up with some friends and acquaintances over the course of the day. I saw three boats that I can dream of and picked up essentials at reduced Boat Show prices. This is the first year I have been able to skip purchasing flares. I did a quick count during my trip to the boat and found that I still have more than 12 flares that are under the four year expiry date.

Speaking of flares, Transport Canada may issue new requirements by the end of the year reducing the number of flares by half. There are some restrictions in the changes under consideration. The number of flares will depend on the boat being equipped with a VHF radio and some rules about the distance from shore. However, it will come as good news to those of us who already have a collection of expired flares that exceeds the minimum requirements for acceptable pyrotechnics. There is also consideration being given to laser devices which could replace flares. It is good to see modernization of the safety equipment requirements that reflects current technology.

Transport Canada is also working with their counterparts in the United States to set common standards for life jackets. As most members are aware, boaters in Canadian waters must have a life jacket/pfd for each person on the vessel and these devices must meet Canadian standards. A lifejacket/pfd made in the USA which does not carry a Canadian safety rating does not qualify. I have an inflatable with a built in harness that was made in the USA. It will be nice to count it in my complement of safety gear.

Our course offerings began on January 20. Seamanship and Boating Basics are running on Tuesdays at Dr. Denison HS in Newmarket. Boating Essentials will start on February 24. If you or anyone you know with a PCOC wants to learn more about safe boating including an introduction to marine charts, consider joining us for the Essentials class.

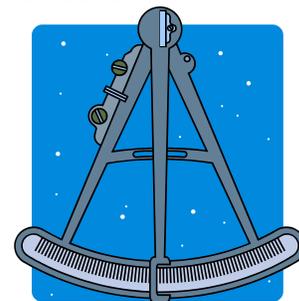
In this issue we compare Cell Phones with VHF Radio for safety on the water. We hope you find this informative.

On behalf of the Bridge:

Bill Reynolds, AP
Squadron Commander

Course Offerings for Novice and Experienced Boaters

This year we are offering a variety of courses that we hope will interest boaters of all abilities. For first time boaters there is Boating Basics through which you can receive your Pleasure Craft Operator's Certificate (PCOC). The next step is Boating Essentials which expands on the Basics program and introduces charting, the use of marine charts for navigation. Seamanship, one of our advanced courses, will be run in the winter and VHF Radio will be offered in April. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about boating, check out our website and enroll in the program that meets your needs. All of our courses are run at Dr. Denison High School, 135 Bristol Rd, Newmarket.



Starting January 20, 2015:

- Boating Basics
- Seamanship

Starting February 24, 2015:

- Boating Essentials

Starting April 28, 2015:

- VHF Radio

For information about these and other courses, costs, and registration, contact Ian Ferguson, Training Officer at npsinfo@mailonly.ca or refer to our website www.cps-ecp.ca/newmarket or www.boatingcourses.ca

The Bridge of the Newmarket Power and Sail Squadron meets at 8:00 pm on the first Wednesday of each month (September through June) at the Newmarket Community Centre, 200 Doug Duncan Drive, in downtown Newmarket. All members are welcome to attend.

Bridge Officers 2014-15

Commander	Bill Reynolds, AP	Secretary	Ian Ferguson, AP
Treasurer	Barbara Dodds	Training Officer	Ian Ferguson, AP
Asst. Training Officer	Stuart Denny	Membership Officer	Scott Gibson, AP
Administration Officer	Bill Forbes, AP	Public Relations Officer	Marilyn Ellison, AP
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Social Officer	Janet Heard, AP	Webmaster	Alan MacDonald, S
Quartermaster	Teresa Hunt	Immediate Past Commander	David Puttock, AP

Cell Phone vs. VHF Radio

Having a cell phone on board allows you to keep in touch with land-based people and businesses easily. They are very convenient but in some situations they shouldn't be used in place of a very high frequency (VHF) radio, the benefits of which we address below. Here are some things to consider regarding cell phones.

- Cell phones, although very convenient on land, are less reliable on the water. Most are not water resistant, and their range is relatively short when compared to their range on land due to the amount of land based towers and repeaters.
- Range is further complicated by the fact that the majority of mobile antenna/stations are placed and oriented with land-based use in mind, so the distance offshore that a vessel can remain in contact is frequently shorter.

- Your communication reach with a cell phone is also limited on the water because you must know the other ship's phone number. A cell phone also won't allow you to 'broadcast' to several boaters at a time which is important in a true emergency.

Why a VHF Radio is Preferred

Very High Frequency (VHF) marine-band radios have been around for many years and remain the primary means of communication for vessels throughout Canada and the United States. VHF radios should be your 'go-to' device in an emergency unless you are practically within shouting distance from shore. The main uses of a VHF radio are:

- Distress calling and SAFETY
- Ship to shore and ship to ship communications
- Navigation (vessels to bridges, etc.)
- Marine operator to place calls to shore
- Marine Weather Broadcasts

For reliable on-the-water communications, we recommend using either hand-held or fixed-mount VHF radios. If you experience engine failure, or a fierce storm disables you, or you find yourself in a true emergency, a VHF radio can be your lifeline to the world. In Coast Guard jurisdictions, VHF's are monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

VHF Marine Radio Channels

Most VHF radios on the market today have in excess of twenty-five usable channels. Aside from the Canadian channels there are also International and U.S. channels, all of which come standard with many of the newer units on the market. You won't be using the vast majority of channels on your VHF. However, channel 16 on your VHF radio is probably the most important.

Channel 16 is designated as the distress, safety and calling frequency. All vessels should monitor this channel while underway if their VHF radio is powered up. Calls to other vessels or land-based businesses and marinas are normally initiated on Channel 16 too. Any vessel in distress should use Channel 16 (which the Coast Guard monitors). Channel 26 is the most common working channel for Coast Guard in the event of an emergency.

When hailing other boats for routine communication, you'll need to call them on 16 and then move to an available working channel, usually 09 or 11. Always remember to check for channels authorized for use in your area as well as any local restrictions.

The Basics of Marine Radio Use

To use your VHF, turn it on and pick a channel, set the squelch to the point where you don't hear any white noise, and begin talking. Things to remember when you are on the radio:

- Monitor channel 16 when you are not actively in conversation with someone else. While not required for recreational boaters, it is an unwritten rule for radio users.
- Don't tie up channel 16. If you are talking with someone, switch to a working channel so you are not keeping others from using channel 16. In some instances, the Coast Guard may order you to switch channels if you are abusing this channel.
- A VHF radio is not a telephone. When you use your VHF, everyone tuned to that station in the area can hear you! Watch your language, and try to keep your conversations short and to the point so that others may use the channel.
- It is unlawful to intentionally transmit a false distress alert, or intentionally transmit a false alert without taking steps to cancel that alert.

Calling for Help?

In emergency situations, there are certain procedures to follow to ensure prompt response to your need for help. There are three phrases that you might hear on a VHF radio, and they all relate to safety.

- MAYDAY - distress signal, requires the most urgent response. This signal is only to be used when a person, or boat is threatened by grave or imminent danger, and requires assistance.
- PAN-PAN - (pronounced pahn-pahn) used to signal urgent information, like when someone has fallen overboard, or a boat is drifting into shore or a busy shipping channel. If your emergency isn't immediately life threatening, say Pan-Pan instead of Mayday, for example if you have a controllable leak, and you want help standing by in case it gets worse.
- SECURITE – (pronounced sea-cur-i-tay) is the safety signal. This is used to transmit information about the safety of navigation. For instance, if a large commercial vessel is coming through a narrow channel, this signal would be used. Can also be used to transmit weather information, such as when a powerful storm system is approaching.

Digital Selective Calling (DSC) – What Could be Easier?

A VHF radio equipped with Digital Selective Calling, or DSC, has the equivalent of a 'mayday button.' All new fixed-mount VHF radios come with this one-button feature, which is usually labeled 'DISTRESS.' When activated, it automatically broadcasts an encoded distress call that will be picked up by all nearby vessels equipped with DSC as well as Coast Guards vessels and their shore stations. If the radio is interfaced with your GPS, it will also automatically broadcast the distressed vessel's position. To use DSC, you must obtain an MMSI (Maritime Mobile Service Identity) number. You may do so free of charge through Industry Canada. There are other great features of the DSC radio such as calling or hailing a fellow boater or a group of boaters that might be travelling or fishing together. You can do this if you know their MMSI numbers, with the push of a button instead of having to hail by speaking into the microphone.

To learn more about VHF Radio and to obtain the required operator's permit, contact Training Officer, Ian Ferguson at metaianferguson@gmail.com or enroll in the VHF course at www.boatingcourse.ca.

