



America's Boating Club® - Knoxville

For Boaters, By Boaters™



Now Hear This!

A Unit of District 17 of the United States Power Squadrons, Inc.®

Newsletter Vol 38 No 3

March 2026

Executive Committee 2026

Commander:
Cdr John Farmer, SN-IN
(865) 765-3407

Executive Officer:
Vacant

Administrative Officer:
Vacant

Secretary:
Lt/C Walt Hanson, AP IN
(865) 803-5842

Education Officer:
Lt/C Jeff Schmitt, S
(410) 493-4395

Treasurer:
Barbara Schmitt
(401) 493-4395

Bridge Assistants 2026

Asst Education Officer:
1st/Lt Steve Brumit, AP-IN
(423) 737-9922

Asst Admin Officer:
1st/Lt Beth Fendley, S
(865) 384-1233

Publicity Chairman:
Vacant

Commander's Report 3/2026

Cdr John Farmer

Thanks for electing me as your new commander and please welcome our new bridge listed on the left. As you can see, we do not have an Executive Officer or an Administrative Officer. Their absence will increase the workload on the remaining bridge. We also need a Public Relations Chairman to help attract new members and make everyone aware of our events and educational offerings. I will do my best to help our club increase our membership and retain current members. Anything you can do to help will be most appreciated!

USPS was organized in 1914 (112 years of service to the boating community) after the founders helped rescue sailing yachts in the 1912 Boston Yachtr Club Race from a Nor'easter.



Thanks to Walt we received another distinctive communicator award. Check out our....**NEW** website at: www.abc-k.org
Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericasBoatingClubKnoxville/>
national organization at: www.USPS.org

Organization

GENERAL COMMITTEES – 2026

Audit

Chair: Lt/C Walt Hanson, AP-IN
 2-Year: 1st/Lt Beth Fendley, S
 3-Year: **Vacant**

Nominating

Chair: Ed Fendley, S
 2-Year: **Vacant**
 3-Year: **Vacant**

Rules

Chair: **Vacant**
 2-Year: **Vacant**
 3-Year: **Vacant**

APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND OFFICERS – 2026

Chaplain

Cdr John Farmer SN-IN

Historian

Lt Jeanette Farmer, P

IT / Facebook Administrator

Cdr John Farmer, SN-IN

IT / Website Administrator

Cdr John Farmer SN-IN

Law Officer

P/C Jim Barkley, SN

Legislative Liaison

Lt Joel Stern

Membership:

Lt Jeanette Farmer, P

Merit Mark

Vacant

Newsletter Editor

Cdr John Farmer SN-IN

Port Captain - Fort Loudoun

Cdr John Farmer, SN

Port Captain – Lower Norris

Lt Bonnie Fried, P

Port Captain - Tellico

Dan Johnson, JN

Port Captain - Watts Bar

Ed Fendley, S

Public Relations Chair

Vacant

Roster & Calling Committee

Lt Robin Hanson, S

Vessel Safety Check Chair

Lt Joel Stern

From Our Chief Commander Mike Wiedel, SN-IN

The recreational boating market is rapidly changing reality. While the passion for the boating lifestyle remains at historic heights, the path to entry has changed. We are seeing a move away from traditional, sole-ownership of vessels toward a shared-access model, including boat clubs, rentals, and fractional ownership.

Today's boater seeks "just in time" knowledge. We must continue to expand our on-demand, mobile-friendly, high-quality video and certification content through the America's Boating Channel and other digital outlets. Our meetings must offer more than just dinner gatherings and administrative reports; they must be events that people wait to attend with anticipation.

Our squadrons must adapt to this new reality. We can no longer assume our students own the boats they operate. Our educational offerings and activities must be as relevant to a first-time personal watercraft user or a boat club member as they are to a seasoned cruiser.

For our organization to thrive, our local squadrons must become the local boating community hub that offers value, inclusivity, and flexibility. This means embracing digital media and education and expanding the social environment.

With the median age of boat owners trending higher, we must aggressively target younger demographics and diverse communities. This isn't just about marketing; it's about creating an inclusive social environment where every boater feels they belong.

The health of America's Boating Club | United States Power Squadrons lives and dies at the local squadron level. Our squadrons are the lifeblood of this organization. In an era where families are looking for high-value, repeatable experiences, boating stands out as a "durable entertainment platform." **By offering valuable membership experience, expert mentorship, and a link to a nationwide network of friends and knowledge, squadrons provide a return on investment for the recreational boating dollar that no one else can match.**

So, I ask you, if your squadron is struggling, step into a leadership role, advocate for your squadron, partner with your district, use the available tools. Your squadron needs your ideas, your energy, and your commitment. We need you to help recruit, teach, and inspire.



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Commander's Report 3/2026 Continued

Cdr John Farmer

See <https://americasboatingchannel.uscreen.io/catalog> , https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1c_rFyt1fGqvdiSauAijAg ,and <https://www.facebook.com/americasboatingchannel/> and tell all your boating friends. We need to get the word out in every way we can!

As you know our national organization is also struggling. We have not had enough dues increases to even keep up with inflation. At the national meeting in Myrtle Beach, we voted to increase the national dues by \$10.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for families. While we don't like to see dues increases that represents only about the cost of one fast food meal for one person. Surely, we can afford that once a year to help our proud organization continue its great work.

Dues will now be	National	District	Squadron	Total Dues	New member admin fee	Initial Membership Cost
Single Member	\$70.00	\$10.00	\$22.00	\$112.00	\$20.00	\$132.00
Family Unit	\$110.00	\$15.00	\$33.00	\$158.00	\$20.00	\$178.00

We still need suggestions for events, meeting locations and informative speakers. We have recently met on Thursday night but there are conflicts among some members. **Would Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday be a more convenient meeting night? Please let Cdr Farmer know or I will assume Wednesday night.**

We need your help to get the word out about the many benefits of membership plus our many member benefits.

Marine / Boating

McGraw Hill

GPS for Mariners

Office & More

Office Depot/Office Max

UPS Shipping

Travel

Avis / Budget

DAN Boater insurance

Road Scholar Program

Health

American Hearing

Prescription Savings

Education

Reduced course fees

Great Lakes Cruising Club School

Insurance / Finance

Boat Insurance

Travelers Insurance

You can offset the cost of membership by taking advantage of these savings at <https://portal.americasboatingclub.org/ABC/ABC/News/My-Member-Benefits.aspx?hkey=fd2cae55-31aa-4a9c-8db0-42d2b7035bec> after you log into the iMIS member portal at https://portal.americasboatingclub.org/iCore/Contacts/Sign_In.aspx .

I have used Office Depot/Office Max frequently in the past.

Office Depot/Office Max

The USPS Office Depot® Member Benefits Program is now **ODP Business Solutions**. USPS members must **register for a new account** t™ at <https://community.officedepot.com/GPOHome?id=68292843> to receive discounts. **Members save up to 75% on preferred products with free next-business-day delivery** and access to **print and copy services** by visiting <https://www.odpbusiness.com/> .

I also use Dan Boater, and it helped when Jeanett got sick in the Caribbean.

DAN Boater

As of February 15, 2023, USPS no longer collects renewals or payments for the DAN Boater member benefit to save USPA administrative time and expense. There are no changes to pricing or coverage, only how payments are processed. Current members can renew by logging in at danboater.org/member and new members can enroll by calling 919-490-2011. For all questions, please contact DAN Boater directly, not USPS Headquarters. See <https://danboater.org/> for details.

America's Boating Club Boat Insurance

The America's Boating Club Boat Insurance Program, created and managed by McGriff, Seibels & Williams and underwritten by Travelers, offers exclusive coverage for club members with discounts up to 38%. Designed for educated, safety-minded boaters, it has served members since 1988 with reliable protection and service. Members can learn more or request quotes at ABCBoatInsurance.com or by calling 1-800-763-8777.

Change of Watch



Past Commander Don Perrine received a certificate of appreciation and a past commander's flag from the incoming Commander John Farmer.

Unfortunately, we only had seven local members plus District Commander Chris Whitaker present to thank Don for all his efforts in keeping America's Boating Club-Knoxville going for the past three years 2023-2025.

Other recent past commanders include: 2022 Bob Mattison, 2021 David A. Kimball, 2019-20 Tom Dietrich, 2017-18 Janet Bray, 2016 David Powers, 2015 Michael P. Scher, and 2013-14 Chuck Q. Smith. We have had 46 commanders since we were first chartered as the Dogwood Squadron, on May 20, 1963. We have been serving our members and the boating public for 63 years.

We have requested to be an exhibitor and presenter at the 2027 Downtown Knoxville Boat Show if there is enough club members' interest to support this. Cdr Farmer can do the presentation even if we don't have a free exhibitors booth.



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Educational Department Report by Jeff Schmitt

Class	Session Dates
Class #1	3/13 and 3/20
Class #2	3/27 and 4/3
Class #3	4/10 and 4/17
Class #4	4/24 and 5/1
Class #5	5/8 and 5/15

Our educational officer, is offering the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency basic boating class at Grace Lutheran Church at 13131 W Gettysburg Ave, Oak Ridge, TN 37830 from 7:00 to 9:00 each night. This is a compressed course which some students want.

Cdr Farmer is now receiving contact information on students taking our full ABC™ course online in our area. One student is very active and is purchasing a 45-foot boat in New York to do the Great Loop. Unfortunately, he is closer to Nashville but said their website and Facebook page looked out of date so he responded to me. I told him we had many experienced loopers in the Knoxville club. I suggested he take our Marine Navigation course online and told him I would be happy to help where possible.

Treasurer's Report by Barbie Schmitt

Our last current balance was \$12,033.

John Farmer's analyses	Income	Expense	Profit	Dues & Education
Calendar year 2023	\$7,639.92	\$6,585.04	\$1,054.88	\$5,846.00
Calendar year 2024	\$6,382.60	\$4,662.61	\$1,719.99	\$4,383.00
Calendar year 2025	\$1,031.00	\$1,700.16	(\$669.15)	\$631.00

As you can see our major sources of income decreased drastically! Education income is offset to a certain extent by what we pay National for course materials and BOC passports and membership by District and National fees.

Technical

There are some new boating products becoming available.



Category: Through-hull transducer for measuring depth, speed-over-water and water temperature
Manufacturer: Airmar Technology Corp.
Cost: \$1,500 (price available online in February 2026)
Description: What sailor hasn't been frustrated by those paddle wheel speed sensors that invariably get fouled by sea creatures after spending just a few days in the water? Airmar developed the new TriSonic Smart Sensor to measure speed-over-water, as well as depth and water temperature, while doing away with the paddle wheel. Designed to fit in the same through-hull fittings used by the vendor's popular Airmar ST800 Triducer, the TriSonic Smart Sensor uses an ultrasonic sensor to measure boat speed over the water. The transducer also delivers heel and trim data, connecting via Bluetooth to Airmar's CAST smartphone app for calibrating depth offsets and speeds at up to five heel angles.



Category: High-intensity electronic visual distress signal
Manufacturer: ACR Electronics Inc.
Cost: \$199 (price available online in February 2026)
Description: The days of single-use pyrotechnics that fail when wet, expire within a few years, and threaten to burn hands, arms and inflatable vests and rafts may be coming to a close. Electronic signaling began with first-generation devices, like the original ResQFlare shown at left in the inset above. The slightly larger ACR ResQFlare Pro, shown at right in the inset, was demonstrated at the show, as shown in the larger pictures, with a blast of high-intensity flashing light by Mikele D'Arcangelo of ACR Electronics. The Pro model is buoyant, waterproof and meets the latest RTCM (Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services) international standards embraced by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Flashing red-orange and cyan LEDs combined with an infrared component, the ResQFlare Pro offers three hours of high-intensity signaling with eight user-replaceable 123 Lithium batteries (not included). Together with its included daytime distress flag, the ResQFlare Pro meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements to be carried in lieu of traditional pyrotechnic flares. There's still a place for aerial flares and parachute rockets that can be seen over the horizon, but the ResQFlare Pro is rated for effective visibility within eight miles without the short burn time and burn risk.

If you get an SOS strobe light like I did it's safer than flares but still gives you the ability to signal for help from boats that are close.

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Breeze Bandit 4-Way Wind Scoop

A simple, zero-power upgrade that makes hot-weather boat life dramatically more comfortable

\$69.95 \$79.95



Category: Wireless remote docking controller

Manufacturer: Dockmate

Cost: Varies with the complexity of the installation

Description: Dockmate puts helm control in the palm of your hand with palm-sized remote devices that control shifting, throttles, thruster(s), the windlass and even the horn, from anywhere on a boat. The new Dockmate Pro, introduced in late 2025 and seen in Miami, is billed as a "more affordable," easy-to-use, push-button model offering proportional (rather than on/off binary) control.

The Dockmate Pro's proportional lever controls are said to give captains more precise, tactile control that mirrors the natural feel of manual throttles. Independent magnetic and capacitive communication channels offer redundancy in the event of a system fault. The remote also features a two-inch, backlit and sun-readable black-and-white LCD display to provides immediate access to status updates, configuration settings, alarm codes and visual position indications. A built-in light sensor dynamically adjusts backlighting on the display and keypad, ensuring optimal visibility in all conditions.

Dockmate remotes require three points of propulsion, whether that's two engines and a bow thruster or a single engine plus bow and stern thrusters. The remotes interface with all major engine and thruster control protocols. If you already have a joystick control at the helm, you can add a Dockmate joystick-style remote and take control from whatever spot offers the best visibility. Articles on past-generation Dockmate remotes quoted costs of upwards of \$17,500 for the remote, communications hub and installation, but pricing will vary depending on the model of the remote, the number of channels and the complexity of the installation.



Category: Lithium battery fire extinguisher

Manufacturer: LiCell, distributed by Summit Fire & Security

Cost: \$110 to \$800, depending on size/capacity (price available online in February 2026)

Description: If you've ever seen a lithium battery fire, it's fierce and potentially catastrophic. What's worse, ordinary fire extinguishers can't stop thermal runaway combustion. Hand-held, portable LiCell fire extinguishers are specifically formulated to smother lithium battery fires. LiCell uses Aqueous Vermiculite Dispersion (AVD) technology based on a naturally occurring mineral that is both chemically and physically inert. The chemical exfoliation of vermiculite produces microscopic platelets that act as a lithium battery fire extinguishing agent. U.S. distributor Summit Fire & Security, which exhibited LiCell products in Miami, also offers fixed fire suppression systems specifically formulated for compartments containing lithium batteries.

New Members

Huntsville is gaining members by offering free, short seminars and Chattanooga seems to be able to attract more basic boating students than we do. We could spend \$400 to get contact information for people who attended the Downtown Knoxville Boat Show but without having a booth there and talking to them we don't know what their interests are. We have up to \$300 in Google matching ad grant money that we can use. If we decide to spend money that would be matched, what should we advertise? We are now signed up on Yelp, and they have a similar program. We had 40 people look at our Yelp listing last week, and two clicks but you must pay to get contact their information. We post on Facebook and share posts with all local area boating Facebook groups. Some days over 200 people visit our Facebook page and its free and only takes time to assemble interesting posts. If we have a post directly soliciting members, we can pay to boost the post if we want to.

America's Boating Club-Knoxville

A friendly, knowledgeable group of boaters.

Join us to enhance your boating enjoyment!

ABC-K.org

We offer free Vessel Safety Checks, free seminars, free YouTube videos @ sailingtucan.org/river-navigation, and courses from basic boating (to get TWRA wallet card) to Offshore Navigation plus numerous electives like Engine Maintenance, Weather, etc. email captfarmer@gmail.com for info.

At the Change of Watch, Commander Farmer handed out these double-sided business cards with a QR code that takes people to our website. These can be sent to any of our current members who can hand them out to boating friends. Our latest marketing guidance says people are more likely to keep a business card than a traditional brochure. We could do dockside gatherings and pass these cards and brochures out. The "About" page on our ABC-K.org website now lists some of our member benefit discounts. These will be split out into a PDF that people can easily download.

As mentioned in the educational section we are sending emails to people who that take the ABC™ course online. We got another contact for a person two hours away in North Carolina. This is just one more way national is trying to help us get members. What else should we do to attract new members? Lets all really get behind this effort and increase our club membership.

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Event Calendar - 2026 Watch Year					
Date	Time	Location	Event	Leader	Comments/Attended
March 13&20	7:00-9:00pm	Grace Lutheran Church	Basic Boating Class	Jeff Schmitt	TWRA Course/Exam
March 27 April 3	7:00-9:00pm	Grace Lutheran Church	Basic Boating Class	Jeff Schmitt	TWRA Course/Exam
April 5-12	Weekend Outing	Vol Navy Docks	Rossini Festival, FRI docktails, SAT festival then docktails & dinner		
April 10&17	7:00-9:00pm	Grace Lutheran Church	Basic Boating Class	Jeff Schmitt	TWRA Course/Exam
April 24 & May 1	7:00-9:00pm	Grace Lutheran Church	Basic Boating Class	Jeff Schmitt	TWRA Course/Exam
April 24-26	3 Day	TBD	TBD	TBD	
May 8&15	7:00-9:00pm	Grace Lutheran Church	Basic Boating Class	Jeff Schmitt	TWRA Course/Exam
May TBD	10:00-14:00	Lenoir City Park	Lock-Through Training	John Farmer	New USPS approved Lock-Through Seminar
June	Weeklong	TBD	TBD	TBD	
July	Overnight	TN River Knoxville	4 th of July Viewing	TBD	
August	Overnight	TN National	TBD	TBD	
September 23-26	Allday	Raleigh, NC	Governing Board Meeting	Chief Commander	
September	Weeklong	TBD	TBD	TBD	
October	Overnight	Ish Creek	Overnight (W/CYC)	John Farmer	
November	6:00 pm	TBD	Meeting with speaker	TBD	
December	6:00 pm	TBD	Christmas gathering	TBD	
February	6:00 pm	TBD	Change of Warch	John Farmer	

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