



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 4

April 2026

Executive Committee 2025

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

Executive Officer:
Vacant

Administrative Officer:
Vacant

Secretary:
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(865) 803-5842

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

Treasurer:
Barbara Schmitt
(401) 493-4395

Bridge Assistants 2025

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 4/2026

As you can see, we still have **vacancies** that could be filled to support your Club and allow the Bridge more time to work to provide interesting and informative activities for your Club.

I am still trying to find more on-water events, ashore events, meeting locations, and interesting speakers that will interest our members. **Please share your suggestions.**

I have put together a presentation on Towboating based on my 150-page book that was used at West Kentucky Community College in Paducah in their Marine Training program. They wanted me to teach with this book virtually, but I was too busy at the time. The book and presentation include things learned on the Mississippi, Tennessee, and by extensive study for a Container on Barge Project to ship containers from Mobile to Knoxville.

We have our annual lock-through training scheduled for May 23 at Lenoir City Park (see below for details). Please save the date and come by boat or car to support our club.

We are still currently OK on our 501 (c)(3) filings with the state of Tennessee both as Knoxville Power Squadron and DBA Americas Boating Club Knoxville thanks to P/C James Barkley SN. Thanks Jim!

Our 501 (c)(3) tax exemption certificate (that we must give vendors) had expired but I have filed for a new one.

Reservation confirmed



Mimi's Cafe - Knoxville

Table for 20 on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 6:30 pm

Name: John Farmer
Confirmation #: 39205

Meeting site confirmed for 20 but we can add more. Please email me at captfarmer@gmail.com if you can attend and please bring friends. There will be a drawing for all the pot with tickets are \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00 so your meal could be free. Members and guests can order from the bar and for dinner. Our speaker will be either a marine surveyor (invited) or my presentation on Towboating mentioned above.

Events on our calendar that I would like to highlight are Jeff's two TWRA classes and one ABC Class. Thanks, Jeff.

April 18 and 19 Rossini Festival. We may have our 37-foot stink potter by then so I don't think we can make that one, but we will try.

April 29th the meeting mentioned above at Mimi's Restaurant 6:30 to 8:45.

May 16-22 National Safe Boating Week followed by our Lock Training on 23rd.



Saturday, July 4th fireworks viewing in Knoxville. We can anchor in front of the City View Apartments just below the Norfolk Southern bridge and dock at the Vol Navy docks after the fireworks are over.

August 15 Loudon Riverfest John, Jeanette, other. September longer cruise, possibly meeting with the Chattanooga Club and we could arrange a cruise on the SOUTHERN BELLE, visit the aquarium, and have dinner at the Overboard Bar and Grill next to the

MoonPie General Store. We need an event captain for this one as well.

John C Farmer
Commander



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Contact the editor at captfarmer@gmail.com

Organization

GENERAL COMMITTEES – 2025

Audit

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

Nominating

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

Rules

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

APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND OFFICERS – 2025

Chaplain

Cdr John Farmer SN-IN

Historian

Lt Jeanette Farmer, P

IT / Facebook Administrator

D/Lt/C John Farmer, SN-IN

IT / Website Administrator

Cdr John Farmer SN-IN

Law Officer

P/C Jim Barkley, SN

Legislative Liaison

Lt Joel Sterm

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

Roster & Calling Committee

Lt Robin Hanson, S

Lock Training Seminar.

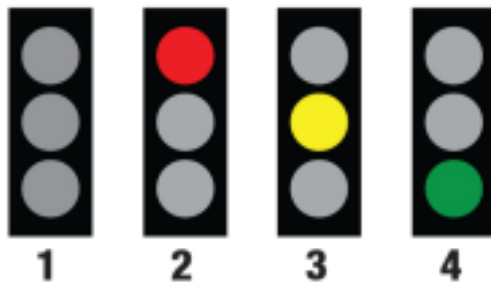
We have a lock training seminar scheduled for Saturday, May 23rd at Lenoir City Park as we have done in the past. The shelter is reserved for us from 9:00 – 3:00 and we have a USPS insurance covering the training. Cdr. John will present the USPS “*Locking Seminar*” and SEO, Jeff is taking care of hamburgers and hot dogs for us and our guests. Thanks, Jeff. To sign up, please send a check for \$10.00 to John Farmer at 8016 Ellisville LN, Knoxville, TN 37909 and bring a covered dish to help defray our expenses. Due to insurance concerns, we will not be putting students on our boats or going on theirs unless a member wants to volunteer to do so on their own. This event will follow **National Safe Boating Week May 16 to 22.**

The seminar will cover essential safety procedures for navigating locks, including contacting lock operators via VHF Channel 16 and observing signal lights. Key practices include using mooring lines and maintaining no-wake speeds inside the chamber. Read the full details from the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](https://www.usace.army.mil/Portals/0/docs/default-source/lock-trainings/lock-training-manual.pdf).

Special Considerations When Locking Through

- Engines should be shut down during the lockage.
- Always wear your life jacket and stay in your boat.
- If the lock is in use, find a safe place to wait that is well out of the path of exiting boats. Do not anchor in the channel or tie off to a navigation buoy.
- Never allow your boat to drift into the restricted area.
- In a crowded lock, you may have to tie up to another boat.
- Under certain conditions and under the direction of the lockmaster, you may occupy the lock with a towboat if both agree.
- Do not cut in front of towboats to be first to the lock. Even though you may appear to have arrived first, a tow has the right-of-way, and the lockmaster will decide who has priority.
- If you get in trouble and your boat is drawn into the dam, some locations have safety blocks on the upstream side. Grab the attached line as you go by and wait for rescue.

Lock Signals



- 1) Contact lock and dam for lockage by pulling signal cord, calling on marine channel 16 or by cell phone. (Phone numbers are listed on paper river charts that can be viewed or downloaded free. Search for “Corps of Engineers Chart Download” and select your river.)
- 2) Stand clear, do not approach, lock is in use.
- 3) Lock is being made ready, vessel may approach but under full control.
- 4) Lock is ready, enter lock slowly and follow lock operators’ direction



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Coop Charting as a Public Service

There are several sections of our USPS Coop Charting Program. 1) ATON off station or damaged report using the <https://solocator.com/> App. 2) Marina surveys will list marina services on <https://cruisersnet.net/> and 3) Geodetic marker verification. I am working on marina surveys for Fort Loudon. If you see an ATON off station or severely damaged, please report that.



Geodic mark



CORS station

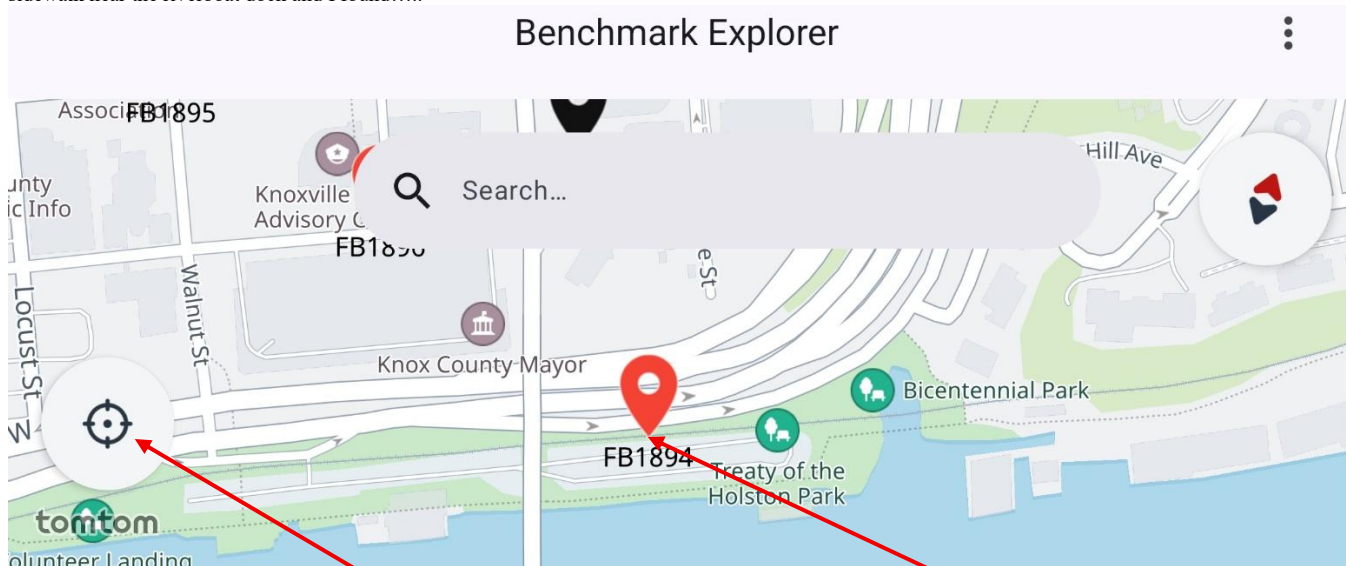
“Why Geodetic Survey Marks are Still Needed in the Era of GNSS and CORS”

In geodetic surveying, traditional ground monuments such as brass disks, rod marks are commonly referred to as passive geodetic marks, because they do not actively collect data. In contrast, active control stations, such as Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS), continuously track satellite signals and provide Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) observations used for precise positioning. While planning for geodetic mark recoveries in NGS Map, on your smartphone or out in the field, you may have come across

a CORS station. Like passive marks, many CORS stations also have PID designations. However, if recovered, CORS stations cannot be submitted for credit in the USPS Cooperative Charting program. NOAA/NGS is continuously aware of their location and operation, so they only want us to recover regular marks like the one above left.

With the growth of CORS, we might wonder - are passive marks still relevant? Advances in satellite positioning have dramatically improved the efficiency and precision of modern surveying. Techniques based on GNSS now allow surveyors to determine positions with centimeter-level accuracy in real time. Despite these technological developments, the more than one million geodetic survey marks distributed across the United States remain an essential part of the nation's geospatial infrastructure. Physical survey monuments continue to provide legal, historical, and practical reference points that anchor modern satellite-derived coordinates to the ground.

The easiest search tool to use for Android is the Benchmark Explorer app and for iPhones use the BenchMap Hunter app. I knew there was a benchmark in the sidewalk near the riverboat dock and I found.....



It defaults to show benchmarks around your current location, so it is easy to walk right up to a mark like the Red FB1894 above. If you scroll the screen, you can always return to your current position by tapping the circle in the lower left.

Happy marker hunting even if you don't have a boat right now. If you have questions or to submit a report, see <https://www.usps.org/departments/12000/12200> .



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Banner and Flags



At one time we had the banner shown to the left that John, Jeanette, and others used at the Tellico in water boat show.

We also had US and USPS flags. They had a round gold base, two section flagpoles with eagles at the top. The last time Cdr. Farmer remembers seeing them being used was at the 2023 Change of Watch at Bluetick Tavern. If you know where either of these are please let Cdr. Farmer know.



Educational Department Report by Jeff Schmitt

Jeff has TWRA classes scheduled for (Class 2 – 27 March & 3 April, Class 3 – 10 & 17 April – 7:00-9:00). He has an ABC® class scheduled for 24 Apr, & 1 & 8 May 6:30 – 9:00. All classes are being held at the Grace Lutheran Church, 131 W Gettysburg Ave, Oak Ridge, TN 37830 (please use rear entrance). The ABC class has been listed on the iMIS Event Calendar with national. Our sincere thanks to Jeff for organizing and hosting these classes at his church. If the ABC class makes (people in our area have been taking it online) Cdr. Farmer will cover the last night with the exam.

Don't forget our online courses at <https://americasboatingclub.org/index.php/learn/select-type-of-boating/all/all-courses> and the virtual radar course covered below.



Boating Courses and Seminars and On the Water

An educated boater is a better boater! We offer a wide range of boating courses and seminars for all levels, including boat handling, navigation, boating rules and regulations, marine electronics, boat maintenance in the classroom, online, and on the water.

Online there are classes in

- **Boat Handling** builds your competence and confidence in the water with an in-depth look at the practical boating skills.
- **Marine Navigation** gives you the skills you need to get where you're going using charts and marine electronics as well as a knowledge of winds.
- **Cruising Under Power and Sail** prepares you for a multi-day voyage.
- **Engine Maintenance** gives you information on how engines work and basic maintenance procedures, as well as how to recognize problems.
- **Marine Electrical Systems** provides information on Alternating and Direct current, as well as boat electrical systems.
- **Marine Communication Systems** explains the different types of radios and communication options.
- **Weather** is a detailed study of the causes of weather, various types of storms, clouds, and predicting weather.

There are seminars that cover

- Introduction to Marine Batteries
- Marine Weather Forecasting: The 500 Millibar Chart
- Crew At The Helm for your spouse
- Propane Systems On Your Boat
- Cruising Boats and Systems
- Planning Your Cruise

We can offer these courses or seminars virtually if there is enough interest or you can take them online with your member discount.

There are 50 free YouTube seminars by Cdr. Farmer indexed at <https://sailingtoucan.org/river-navigation/> plus others there. He can build others if you suggest a subject.

Giving Back

We inspire members to support their communities. From volunteering to teaching individuals and classes, to providing free Vessel Safety Checks, to crowd sourcing navigation updates, waterway cleanups and more, our members give back while spending time with family and fellow members. Sharing our skills and knowledge benefits the entire community as well as boaters.

Community Events

Our members understand the importance of giving back to their communities. This includes: Promoting boating safety, Environmental conservatism, Helping flood victims, Supporting children and veteran's programs, and Assisting during water events.



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Treasurer's Report by Barbie Schmitt

No report available since the Change of Watch.

We have the following life members: Jeanette Farmer, John Farmer, Jim Barkley, Bob Bray, Tom Dietrich, and Bob McConnel. We ask that life members pay your \$22.00 per person squadron dues to Tom until Barbie can take over.

Becoming a Cruising Sailor



Would you like to become a cruising sailor or know someone who would? No more motor noise and just the sound of the waves gently lapping along the hull while the autopilot does all the steering. Cdr. Farmer has his 29-foot, 1999 Catalina sailboat for sale once it is dewinterized. It is located at Concord Yacht Club and **comes with free lessons**. He has cruised and raced for 30 years inland and offshore. The boat has many extras including a dinghy and TV set. It is a documented vessel named TOUCAN with the name on the sides.

She even has a toucan mascot that keeps watch over the boat and a 24-hour nautical clock.

The boat is ocean ready and if it needs to be trucked Sailors Moving Sailors at (<https://sailorsmovingsailors.com/>), that has moved over 700 sailboats up to 20,000 pounds, out of Nashville can help once they get back from Washington. The J D Power listing for this bare boat is \$27,400 and Cdr. Farmer is asking \$26,000. Power Squadron members are eligible for a discount. See <https://sailingtoucan.org/for-sale/> for more boat details. We are selling the sailboat and buying a power cruiser, so we participate more easily in ABC-K cruises.

The new Sail I course should be available soon. Do you know what a dolphin striker is? If not, you will.



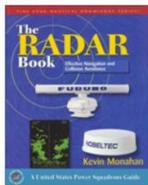
Educational Opportunities

Do you want to take the virtual, instructor led, Radar class from a very experienced instructor and cruiser? I know Eric well and he will provide a thorough course.



RADAR for Boaters

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 for 7-weeks
Time/location: 7-9pm via Zoom



Register

RADAR is an essential tool for navigation and collision avoidance. This 7-week course covers the different types of **radar** equipment, their capabilities and limitations, as well as their features and how they apply to boaters' needs. It covers what you need to know about **Radar**, from how and where to mount the antenna to how to interpret the displays, so you can use your **Radar** for collision avoidance and for navigational purposes. Since 2018, **Radar** for Boaters is a required course for BOC Advanced Coastal Navigation (ACN) and Offshore Navigation certification.
Instructor: PC Eric Ringwall, SN-CN

Cost: Member \$120, Non-Member \$195
Please email SEO Ken Odum, SN @ kpodum@gmail.com to register for class.
All registrations from the above link are also forwarded to Ken.

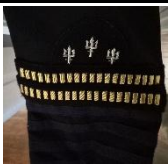
Meet your Instructor: P/C Eric Ringwall, SN-CN



PC Eric Ringwall, SN-CN is a former US Navy Surface Warfare Officer, current USCG 100T Near Coastal Master, and experienced cruiser with over 15,000 nautical miles of cruising on the East and West coasts of the US, Canada and The Bahamas. He is also an ABYC certified Marine Electrician and owner of a marine electronics company. His insights on **radar** usage, selection and installation are valuable for anyone with **radar** installed on their vessel.

For online self-paced courses see <https://americasboatingclub.org/index.php/learn> and you need a login that is different from your USPS.org login. For my free YouTube videos see the index at <https://sailingtoucan.org/river-navigation/>. If see something that is missing, just let me know and I will try to research and develop it.

Merit Marks – Your Pay for Helping Us



A merit mark is the only pay we get for the contributions we make to USPS. It may be only a small gold bar to adorn our uniform, but its significance is greatly coveted. Indeed, five merit marks bring senior member status and 25 merit marks accords a member life membership, exempt from national dues. Cdr. John and Lt Jeanette are both life members. Merit marks are awarded to a member by the Chief Commander based upon a recommendation by the member's squadron commander. A "Merit Mark" (MM) is awarded by the chief commander to a member for substantial personal effort in furthering the interest, programs, and objectives of USPS, its districts, and squadrons. Typically, 25 hours are needed in a year to qualify. Since we don't have a Merit Mark chairman, I will take care of the submissions. Please keep track of your hours as an Event Captain, SEO, Secretary, Treasurer, Mid-Month Blast Editor, Instructor, etc. Cdr. John Farmer has 46 and Lt Jeanette has 26 because she couldn't join until women were admitted in 1982.

We don't wear the uniforms with merit marks (Uniform A shown) or uniform C (long Sleeve) except for the optional Saturday night banquet at national and governing meetings.

What can you do to help qualify for a merit mark this year?



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Event Calendar - 2026 Watch Year					
Date	Time	Location	Event	Leader	Comments/Attended
February 26	6:00pm-	Kirkwood Clubhouse	Change of Watch	Chris Whitacker	McAlister's Club, water, tea \$18.00 ea
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 10&17	7:00-9:00pm	Grace Lutheran Church	Basic Boating Class	Jeff Schmitt	TWRA Course/Exam
April 18&-19	Weekend Outing	Vol Navy Docks	Rossini Festival, FRI docktails, SAT festival then docktails & dinner	TBD	
April 24 & May 8	6:30-9:00pm	Grace Lutheran Church	ABC Boating Class (3 sessions)	Jeff Schmitt and John	ABC Course/Exam Three nights
April 29	Meeting	Mimi's	Towboating Seminar	John Farmer	See above for details
May 23	9:00 - 3:00	Lenoir City Park	Annual Lock Through training seminar	John & Jeff	Following National Safe Boating Week
June	Weeklong	TBD	TBD	TBD	
July 4	Overnight	TN River Knoxville	4 th of July Viewing	TBD	Anchor then Vol Navy Docks
August 15	All day	Legion Park 201 Ferry St Loudon, TN 37774	Loudon Riverfest	TBD	
September 23-26	Weeklong	Raleigh, NC	Governing Board Meeting	Chief Commander	
September	Weeklong	TBD	TBD	TBD	
October	Overnight	Ish Creek	Overnight W/CYC	John Farmer	
When	How long	Where	What type of event	TBD	Please suggest

Let's expand our calendar with interesting and informative events. **Do you know of other events we could attend ashore or on the water?**



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