



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 5

May 2026

Executive Committee 2025

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 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 5/2026

Thanks to Walt we have minutes from our Change of Watch meeting February 26th. Unfortunately, we only had nine attendees including our District Commander. I wish more of you could have attended.

Don raised a question about USPS cruises and insurance. His research – “revealed to him that one’s private insurance on one’s boat could deny a claim if you are operating under USPS coverage for an event and the USPS insurer denies a claim.” **At present, USPS does not offer insurance for USPS group cruises or meetings but only education.** I have Boat US insurance, and I asked them about coverage for USPS or any group cruises. They replied that I would be fully covered. I think this should be the case with other insurance but if you have any concerns, I encourage you to inquire. I therefore don’t see any reason we can’t safely conduct cruises with our ABC-K group. The only USPS insurance for on-water events is for Boating Operator Certification and Hands On Training. We don’t currently have any members young enough to pull insurance for these events. If you are under 60 and willing to help us with this, please let me know. I will help you get certified, which requires education and an on-water skills test. See below for details.

For community service you might consider the helping with Tellico VFW Post “Rides For Vets”.

Congratulations to P/Lt/C Tom Dietrich SN-CN for achieving life membership so he no longer must pay national dues. Most life members like me contribute annually to national to further our educational programs, etc. To achieve Life Membership, you must earn 25 Merit Marks for service to squadron, district, and/or notional. It typically takes a minimum of 15 hours per year for a merit mark, but many contribute many more. Tom is now eligible to wear



on his uniform when he attends a national meeting, etc. We don’t typically wear uniforms except for national meetings.

Congratulations to P/C William T. Hall SN for receiving his educational achievement award and the grade of SN. This requires completing courses up to N plus six electives, etc. There are now several paths to SN (our highest educational award) see <https://www.usps.org/departments/13000/13000-awards/13000-achievement-recognition-awards?highlight=WyJsaWZlIiwibWVtYmVyc2hpcCJd>



Bill is now authorized to wear the insignia on the left. As a past squadron commander, he is authorized to wear the insignia shown on the right in silver instead of gold since gold represents a current commander like me.



For those who have not achieved either of these awards, what are you waiting for! Contribute work toward another merit mark. If you go to USPS.org > Info Center > search for you > show details, you can see how many merit marks you have and when the last one was awarded. For me it shows that I joined in 1972 and have 46 merit marks. To complete educational requirements, email our Squadron Educational Officer Jeff Schmitt at tjavare@gmail.com or call him at 410-493-4393. You can also complete courses and seminars online at <https://americasboatingclub.org/index.php/learn> . You must create a separate logon for this website.



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national organization at: www.USPS.org

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 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

Roster & Calling Committee

Lt Robin Hanson, S

Line Chafe



We may not have lines this large, but chafe is still a problem. “In the mid-20th century, the marine industry began a gradual transition to synthetic fibers, beginning with nylon and later polyester, which offered superior strength and durability. But there was a catch. Synthetic lines stretch differently from natural-fiber ropes and can recoil violently if they part under tension. The long-term durability of this expensive investment also depends on how it is handled and protected.

“No matter what the material, working lines face a constant set of enemies: ultraviolet exposure, heat buildup, fatigue from repeated loading cycles, and, of course, chafe. Mariners have long relied on improvised solutions to protect vulnerable areas of cordage, using leather wraps and canvas coverings to sections of old fire hose stitched onto a line, all serving as sacrificial barriers between rope and the deck. Today many major cordage manufacturers, including Samson Rope, Yale Cordage, and Cortland International, offer integrated abrasion protection systems, essentially built-in anti-chafe products, designed to extend the service life of high-performance synthetic lines.

“Effective chafe protection must account for how a line moves through deck hardware during normal operations. That often means protecting more than just the eye of the rope. In many applications, chafe gear must extend down the body of the line far enough to pass through chocks, fairleads and other wear points created by lead angles and vessel geometry.

“Chafe-Pro’s removable protection systems are now used on more than 95 percent of U.S. Coast Guard vessels and roughly 70 percent of the U.S. Navy fleet. The company works with major manufacturers including Samson Rope and Yale Cordage.”

John has some extra strong synthetic Dyneeme line but has not tried to use it yet.



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New at West Marine

- New PRO-GRADE detailing compounds, cleaners, and polishes.
- High-quality bilge pumps built to provide high pumping capacity at a great value.
- Expanded Boat Engine Maintenance Selection.
- New, Expanded Selection of Paint Prep & Application Products.

It's Springtime and your boat likely needs some TLC.

John just bought a Standard Horizon HX210 handheld and it has a vast number of advanced capabilities. It may be time to upgrade your marine electronics, etc.

Boating Operator Certification - Inland Requirements

Courses

- NASBLA-approved safe boating course
- Boat Handling course
- Engine Maintenance course
- Marine Electrical Systems course

Seminars

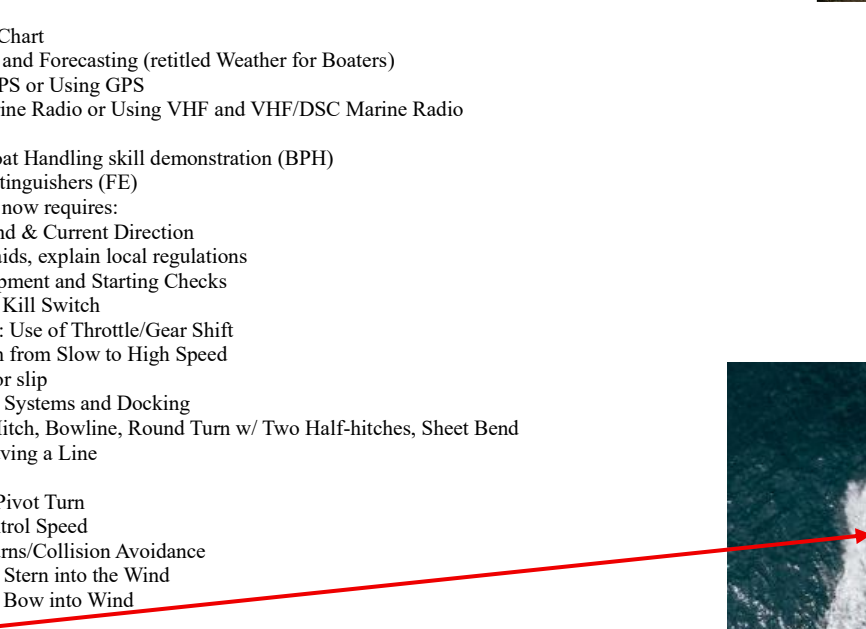
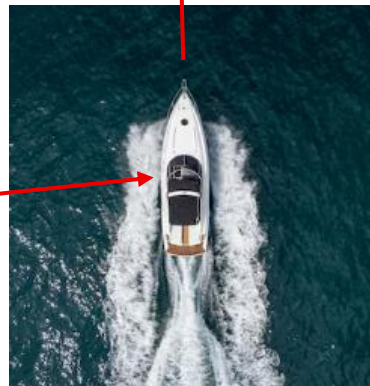
- How to Use a Chart
- Basic Weather and Forecasting (retitled Weather for Boaters)
- How to Use GPS or Using GPS
- All About Marine Radio or Using VHF and VHF/DSC Marine Radio

Skills

- Basic Powerboat Handling skill demonstration (BPH)
- Use of Fire Extinguishers (FE)
- The BPH skill now requires:
 - Determine Wind & Current Direction
 - Point out Navaids, explain local regulations
 - Systems, Equipment and Starting Checks
 - PFD & Use of Kill Switch
 - Shifting Gears: Use of Throttle/Gear Shift
 - Safe Transition from Slow to High Speed
 - Leave a dock or slip
 - Secure a Boat: Systems and Docking
 - Knots: Cleat Hitch, Bowline, Round Turn w/ Two Half-hitches, Sheet Bend
 - Coiling & Heaving a Line
 - Back a Boat
 - Small Radius Pivot Turn
 - Minimum Control Speed
 - Low-Speed Turns/Collision Avoidance
 - Hold Position: Stern into the Wind
 - Hold Position: Bow into Wind
 - Steer a Range
 - Anchor a Boat
 - Departure from & Return to a Mooring
 - Constant Radius Turn
 - Use of Bearing to Avoid Collisions
 - Overboard and Person in Water (MOB) Recovery W/ Anderson Turn
 - Optional slalom course forward and backward

To start your certification, you need to obtain a passport and the process for that is being computerized. If you need a passport now contact our Southeast regional director P/D/C Ronald Osburn SN-CN at ozbrn@bellsouth.net and he can assist you.

Tom Dietrich did an excellent job with John's certification, but he, like the rest of our existing Knoxville certifiers, is too old to qualify for USPS on-water insurance now. We have eight people qualified for BOC IN or CN. For more information about Boating Operator Certification (called BOC), which may lower your boating insurance costs see <https://www.usps.org/departments/13000/13700-on-the-water-training-certification/13700-boat-operator-certification-on-the-water-training> . If Cdr. Farmer can help with obtaining a merit mark, getting your Boating Operator Certification, or anything else you might want, just email him at captfarmer@gmail.com.



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Educational Department Report by Jeff Schmitt

Jeff now has three students in his America's Boating Course® offered in Oak Ridge. Other area students are taking it online and I get their contact information and follow-up, offering course assistance and suggesting Knoxville club membership.

Lock Through Training

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 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.

NMEA 0183 to NMEA One Net

NMEA 0183 is a combined electrical and data specification for communication between marine electronics. It is defined and controlled by the National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA) and was released in March 1983. It uses 4800 baud, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no parity or handshake. The standard defines electrical signal requirements, data transmission protocol and specific sentence formats and supports **one-way** serial data transmission from sources like an echo sounder to a chartplotter etc.

NMEA 0183-HS 38.4K-baud serial data is used for AIS etc. John's vessel data monitor has a NMEA HS input for his AIS receiver. NMEA 0183 does not define the physical connection type, and many variants exist including bare wires. For modern laptops you need a 0183 to USB adapter to input data to OpenCPN, etc.



NMEA 2000 (N2K) was first released in 2001 and John served on the advisory committee. It is a plug-and-play communications standard for connecting marine sensors and display units within ships and boats with communication at 250 kilobits-per-second. It allows any sensor to talk to any display unit or other compatible device and is electrically compatible with the Controller Area Network ("CAN Bus") used on cars and trucks. N2K may be able to connect to your engines.

If you need assistance with any of this email John at captfarmer@gmail.com.

The latest thing is NMEA One Net that uses a still faster speed to handle radar signals. John had to use a separate Ethernet cable for radar on THE STAR before One Net was available. One Net uses standard Ethernet bridges for multiple connections.

Alligator Gar Vs Invasive Silver Carp

In the Tennessee River, Silver Carp are most abundant in the Kentucky Reservoir, with an emerging population in the Pickwick Reservoir as well. Invasive carp, particularly Silver Carp, are expanding into East Tennessee, with confirmed sightings near Knoxville in the Chickamauga Reservoir as of 2020. While major populations are further west, they pose a severe threat to local ecosystems and boating by jumping when disturbed. The TN Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) is actively monitoring and managing their spread. Silver Carp are the primary concern, with a reported sighting in 2019 where a fish jumped into a boat on the Chickamauga Reservoir.

These fish, which include silver, bighead, black, and grass carp, are filter feeders that compete with native fish, threatening to disrupt aquatic ecosystems and damage local fishing/boating. They can move upstream through locks in dams.

TWRA is using commercial fishing and tracking devices to manage the population, particularly around the Kentucky and Barkley reservoirs, to prevent further expansion.

If you catch a silver or bighead carp (especially 9 inches or less), do not release it. Take a photo, note the location (river mile/location), and report it to the TWRA at ans.twra@tn.gov. Freeze the fish, if possible, to allow for testing.

While invasive carp are a concern, traditional, non-native common carp exist in the Tennessee River and are popular with some local anglers. Anglers frequently fish for these in areas like Fort Loudoun Lake. People sometimes fished for carp near the Tennessee Riverboat dock.

Silver Carp often jump when disturbed by boat engines, which can cause injuries or property damage.

Apparently, there has been some success in other areas by releasing Alligator Gar back into the river to help control the Invasive Silver Carp.

Possible District Merger

The D17 executive committee met Sunday April 26th. D/C Chris Whitaker has been unable to find people to fill the district officer positions. Since this is the case, we discussed the possibility of merging with District 26. They have four Savannah area coastal squadrons: Beaufort, Hilton Head, North Strand, Golden Isles, and Savannah. They have four inland squadrons: Golden Corner Lakes, Lake Hartwell, Lake Murry, and Lake Thurmond. They hold one-in-person district meeting and one virtual district meeting each year. If the next in person meeting was on the coast it would be about six and one half hours away. If it was an inland squadron meeting it would be less than four hours away. The consensus was that we should merge and that process is being studied now. Their virtual district meeting would mean everyone in ABC-K could easily attend at least one meeting. Check out their district website at <http://www.abcdistrict26.net/>. It will show as not secure, but it is a valid website.



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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		
April 24 & May 8?	6:30-9:00pm	Grace Lutheran Church	ABC Boating Class (3 sessions)	Jeff Schmitt	TWRA Course/Exam
April 29	Meeting	Mimi's	Towboating Seminar	John Farmer	13 attendees
May 23	9:00 - 3:00	Lenoir City Park	Annual Lock Through training seminar	John & Jeff	See above for details
June	Weeklong	TBD	TBD	TBD	
July 4	Overnight	TN River Knoxville	4 th of July Viewing	TBD	Anchor then Vol Navy Docks for overnight
August	Overnight	TN National	TBD	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 an event as we can use more events so members can meet one another



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