The ANCHOR

Volume 9, Issue 12

DECEMBER 2009

The Official Publication of the Marina West Yacht Club, Stockton CA

From the Commodore, Ken Dretzka

The Marina West Yacht Club has a new home! Our new club house will be occupying a portion of Marine Max's old location at Tower Park and, after a few modifications; we'll be ready to go! I'm sure we'll have some bumps along the way when it comes to design, permitting, paint, etc. but at least we now have a base to re- grow our club. It sure has been a long time coming.

Because of the storage facility at Rough & Ready Island going out of business, all the MWYC stuff we had stored on there has now been moved to Terminus where it is indeed closer but in a whole lot more disarray. Thanks for all the helping hands in getting everything moved and future thanks to everyone that will help sort everything out. It isn't going to be easy!

We've had a couple of cruise outs since my last report to San Joaquin and Weber Point Yacht Clubs. High lights include impromptu enjoyment on the docks of a blue grass band, a very funny & scary costume party, games, relaxation, good food, great drinks, camaraderie, and some mighty fine boating squeezed in between. The MWYC folks sure know how to have a good time!

Merry Christmas to all! Be safe and enjoy your friends and family. Happy New Year, too!

From the Vice Commodore, John Mc Cray

As we wrap up the year we have a lot to be thankful for the past 12 months. We have all had a wonderful time together during cruise outs and other club functions, and we have worked together to find a new club house for us to rebuild our great organization over the next few years. I have no doubt that we will once again be a major player in the yacht clubs of the Delta.

We have two events planned for December with our annual lighted boat parade, *Delta Reflections*, leading off on December 5th. Please be sure and contact Lyn Hahn to register your boat, and let's once again win the trophy for the club with the most boats entered.

Let's all try to make our Christmas party hosted by Lynn Hahn and Judy McCarty. The festivities will be held at the Hahn household in Stockton, so bring on your cookies and a gift for the fun filled evening.

Merry Christmas and a happy new year to all. It's been a great year!

John McCray

What's Inside

The ANCHOR Is now available Electronically. If you received this through the mail, it means we don't have your e-mail address. Please e-mail Mary Lee Michael @ belpassidr@sbcglobal.net

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& application forms
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OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Commodore:
Ken Dretzka

Vice Commodore:
John Mc Cray

Rear Commodore:
Judy Mc Carty

Jr. Staff Commodore:
Ed Stetson

Directors:
Norm Calloway
Ron "Doc" Harper

Secretary:
Candy Calloway

Treasurer:
Lynn Hahn

Parliamentarian:
Jack Michael

PICYA Delegates:
Ed Stetson, Richard Hardy, Jack Michael

RBOC Delegate:
Jack Michael

Blue Gavel Dist. 19
Jack Michael

Club Manager:
Jeff Rose

Safety Officer:
Ed Stetson

Supply Officer:
Christy Mc Cray

Fleet Captains:
John & Christy Mc Cray; Ken & Judy Dretzka;
Jeff Rose; Ed & Bonnie Stetson

Sunshine Committee: Mary Lee Michael

Rear Commodore, Judy Mc Carty

The Christmas Party will be our (and my) last event for the 2009 year. It will be at Lynn's house. So please respond as early as you can, to me. She and I are planning a feast. We've added a small side event of a cookie exchange. Bring a huge plate of your favorite Christmas cookie or candy and we will arrange plates to take home with a variety from what has been offered. We will have the same gift exchange as we have had in the past. I still have the famous "Ladybug Massager". I think that $15 each will cover the dinner costs.
Saturday Dec. 19th 5:00 PM—Hope to see you ALL there.
I'd like to take this opportunity to give you all a big thank you for all the helpful suggestions, support and forgiveness, of the last two years as the Rear Commodore. Without it, this job can be daunting but you all made it fun. Sincerely,
THANK YOU, each and all. Judy McCarty.

P.I.C.Y.A. Report—Jack Michael, SC—Delegate

Marina West Yacht Club was represented at the November 2, 2009 PICYA Awards Dinner by Commodore Ken Dretzka and First Lady Judy, Staff Commodore Ed Stetson and Bonnie, Delegate Richard Hardy and Joan Marsh-Clune, and Staff Commodore/Delegate Jack Michael and Mary Lee. MWYC didn't win a trophy this year in the Newsletter Contest, but we did receive an Honorable Mention placing sixth, and were again a Three Star Club in the Club of the Year (COTY) Contest.

Also at this meeting was the election of PICYA officers for 2010. Our good friend Linda Breninger, of Oxbow YC, was elected to the office of Vice Commodore; and Reginald Smith, Treasure Island YC and Mia Bernt, Richardson Bay YC were advanced to the offices of Commodore and Rear Commodore respectively. They will be formally installed at the Commodore's Ball and Installation, which will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Emeryville on January 30, 2010. Tickets are $65 per person by December 12, and then $75 up until January 16, 2010.

This is a very nice facility for this event with a beautiful view of San Francisco. If you need help making your reservations, please contact me.

This year, at the Awards Dinner, four $2500 PICYA scholarships were awarded to worthy students, three funded by the Western Boating Safety Group and one by PICYA. The Scholarship Program will be held again in 2010, so keep it in mind if you have children, grand children, nieces, nephews, or other relatives looking for college scholarships.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas!!

R.B.O.C. Report, Jack Michael SC, RBOC Director

It has been a very busy year for RBOC, and it is not letting up as I write this report. I will be attending a meeting with the Bureau of Reclamation on the 2-Gate Project in the south Delta. By the way, if you hadn't heard, the Bureau extended their deadline for comments on the project to November 30. If you haven't sent a letter, go to the RBOC web site and do so, please! We are also working on implementation of AB 166 which will enable the turn in of vessels for destruction rather than letting them become derelicts, and the Marina Permit Program being ginned up by the State Water resources Control Board staff. Of course hearing that the State is still in dire financial condition is keeping us ever alert to a rip off of boater's dollars.

I am also providing you with my annual reminder of what RBOC is all about. Recreational Boaters of California celebrated its 41st year of protecting boater's interests this year. Over the years, these efforts have saved individual boaters thousands of dollars! RBOC is funded by voluntary member donations of PICYA member clubs and a donation from Boat U.S. based on the number of Boat U.S. members in California. There are eighteen RBOC Directors who serve voluntarily. Nine are appointed by PICYA and nine by SCYA (Southern California Yachting Association). I serve as one of those Directors. A Sacramento lobbying firm, Desmond & Desmond, is retained to carry out the necessary lobbying efforts in Sacramento. They also provide the necessary administrative functions of the organization. This combined effort is the major expenditure for RBOC. The Board meets four times each year with one meeting being a Legislative Day in Sacto to meet with Legislators and staff. These meetings alternate between Northern and Southern California. The Presidency of RBOC also alternates between North and South each year. The Director's transportation to these meetings is reimbursed from the RBOC budget, if requested, but all other expenses are paid by individual Directors. The President for 2010 is Ann Sacks from the California Yacht Club in Marina Del Rey, with Linda Bendsen from Delta Marina and Encinal YC's serving as Vice President.

MWYC has, for years, included a provision in its By-Laws that assesses each member $10 per year for a donation to RBOC. Members are also encouraged to make additional donations. You can be assured that supporting RBOC is the most cost effective boating expense you have!

I will do my best to keep you up to date on the issues that will be most important to you, and ask that you keep me current on your concerns. Please stay tuned!

Sunshine Report—by Mary Lee Michael

Here we are in December already. 2009 went by very quickly and 2010 is just around the corner.

Great news for the Michael's for the birth of their 2nd Grandson—Hunter Jackson Ogden born on October 2nd to Sandra and Dan Ogden. He joins his big brother Aidan who is 19 months old. Boy are they a busy family now!

On a sad note, Mary Lee's children's father lost his 4 year battle with Cancer on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Phil Ogden will be missed by all the family.

On a happy note, Bonnie Stetson is doing well after her back surgery a few months ago. She is back to almost 100%.

I haven't received any other news about members or their families. I guess you can always say that "No News is GOOD News".

Let's pray that 2010 brings GOOD News to all our members and their families.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to ALL!

Monthly Safety Tips/Reminders—Safety Officer, Ed Stetson

Safety; by Ed Stetson
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Radar Has Saved Many Boats from Disaster, But You Should Know the Limitations
By Frank Mummert
Updated February 24, 2009

It's a classic scene from World War II movies. The captain and his executive officer are hunched over the radar operator, the three of them staring intently at a glowing screen. A radar beam circles the blank screen once, twice, a third time. Then, suddenly, the screen lights up. "There he is," the captain exclaims. The captain turns and, with fire in his eyes, shouts, "we've got him this time! Battle stations!"

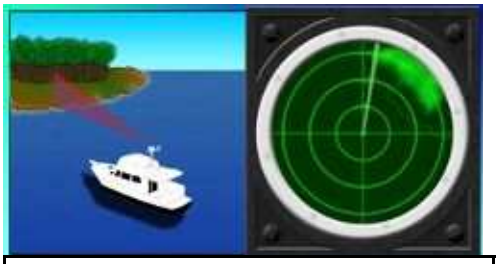
It's an exciting scene that pumps the adrenaline every time. It is also completely wrong.

Anyone who has spent any time staring into with a radar screen quickly discovers that there is a lot of information being presented – some of it useful, most of it not. According to the Rules of the Road, a mariner has to consider the limitations of his radar unit when making decisions, but most radar units don't include a list of these limitations in the owner's manual. A radar class will cover these limits, but there is no requirement for recreational boat owners to take such a class.

The limitations are sea and air clutter, minimum and maximum range resolutions, beam width and beam height. Although these may sound technical, the basic concepts are fairly simple – even intuitive.

SEA AND AIR CLUTTER

Radar was originally billed as a way "to see in the fog" and a significant amount of its application deals with its use in restricted visibility. However, radar is not the all-seeing eye that Hollywood portrays. The best example of what radar really is can be seen on the nightly news.



Radar reflects best off of hard vertical surfaces and slanting beaches may be overshadowed by trees or hills further inshore.

As part of the local news broadcast, a weather forecaster stands in front of a map of the area as rain clouds, shown in green and yellow, march across the screen. This precipitation, your forecaster explains, is being tracked by the super maximum Doppler radars mounted throughout your viewing area. Obviously, if the radar is picking up the movement of rain and snow showers, it is going to have difficulty picking up the fiberglass yacht that is moving in that rain shower.

Water is actually an excellent radar reflector. Both rain and waves can reflect radar energy back and create images on the screen, blanking out entire regions. Most recreational radar installations are less than 15 feet off the water's surface and wave heights of five to seven feet can often be seen on the radar screen. This becomes especially true if the boat is rolling or pitching as it moves through bad weather. Additionally, the direction of the waves can affect the radar return, since breaking waves have one side that is steeper and more vertical than the other. Because of this, the waves on one side of the boat may be much better reflectors.

ATC (Air Traffic Control) and STC (Sensitivity Time Control) on high end units can reduce the effects of air and sea clutter, but most units rely on automatic controls. Unfortunately, without having control over these functions, the operator may not be able to determine how much of the return is being blanked out. Knowing the size and shape of a squall can allow the captain to decide how best to avoid it, along with anything that might be hidden with in the return.

Safety Tips—Continued from Pg. 5

MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM RESOLUTION

The basic concept of radar is that a radio signal is transmitted in a specific direction, and then the radar unit switches over to a receiving mode and measures the amount of energy returned and the amount of time it takes for the signal to return.

Because this takes place over a period of time, the radar beam moves a certain distance from the antenna before it can start to receive. Depending on the specifications of the radar unit and the range for which it is set, that distance may be anything from several feet to a significant part of a mile. Anything inside that distance will not be "seen" by the radar.

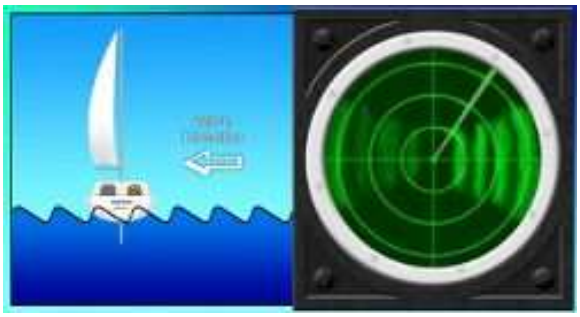
In general, this is not a problem since anything that is close was probably far away at some point and the radar operator should have been tracking it before it got close enough to disappear. But there are situations cases where this is not the case. A small contact with poor reflective characteristics might not reflect enough energy, until it gets close. A target may emerge from the water within the minimum range. Most often the radar may have been off or in radar watch mode, allowing a contact to get close without detection.

The best technique for dealing with minimum range issues is to switch ranges. If the boat is operating in open waters with the radar at the maximum range, the operator should check the closer ranges on a regular basis. If the horizon is cluttered with other vessels and contacts, the operator may need to continuously move between short and long range scanning, while still maintaining plots of other vessels. Use of a separate paper plot becomes important in this situation, since it becomes impossible to keep the plot on the screen.

Maximum resolution becomes an issue in two cases. The first is the maximum distance the radar can "see" because of height. Radar energy is sent out in "line-of-sight," meaning it does not bend much at the physical horizon. Radar beams can only travel about 15 percent further than light waves, meaning that the radar is limited to just beyond the horizon for effective scanning. Because of the curvature of the earth, a contact can be hidden below the effective scan of the radar. A radar antenna mounted fifteen feet off the water has an effective horizon of about five nautical miles. Doubling the height of the antenna moves the horizon out to slightly more than seven nautical miles.

While radar set for a range greater than this distance may produce a return, it will only do so if the contact is tall. The tops of a mountain range may be seen at the edge of the 48 mile maximum transmitter range, but even a large cargo carrier would be hidden until it got within the 20 mile range.

While placing the antenna higher in the rigging will extend the range the radar can see, the trade off is that the raydome will be less stable as the vessel moves. As anyone who has ever been seasick knows, the further one gets from the center of the boat, the more movement is felt. Good radar plotting depends on having a stable platform, so the antenna should be mounted as close to the deck, consistent with crew safety, as possible.



The more vertical shape of wind blown waves can increase the screen clutter on the windward side of the vessel.

BEAM WIDTH

The other issue related to maximum resolution is the width of the radar beam. Radar transmits for a period of time, usually microseconds, and then switches over to receiving, interpreting the signal both in terms of the time it took to receive it and the amount of energy received. It is similar to spraying water from a hose while turning in a circle. The water makes a horizontal spray.

Because of this radar beam width, the receiver may be getting energy from the beginning, the middle or the end of the pulse. The radar screen solves this by "painting" the screen with a bar that covers the entire width of the pulse.

The beam width of recreational radar is generally about 3 degrees of the entire sweep. At five miles, this means the beam is about 700 feet across. This width can affect the radar in two ways. The first is that a small target may not be able to reflect enough energy back to the system to create an effective display on the screen. The other way the beam is affected is if there are two separate contacts with a space of less than the beam width between them. These two contacts may show up on the screen as one large return.

Two vessels, traveling on similar courses, may give a single large return at times, then break in two and come back together. The opening to a small bay may be covered completely. Multiple channel markers may get clumped into a single mass. By relating the view on the radar with that on the chart and looking at the screen with different ranges, it is generally possible to separate fixed items into individual contacts.

BEAM HEIGHT

As the radar beam is created, it is manipulated electronically to be as flat as possible. If it were allowed to expand up and down, the return off of the water nearer the vessel would blank out anything further away. Because of this, the radar return is assumed to be a relatively flat dish of energy, expanding from the antenna. This works well to detect contacts that have a flat, vertical surface, like trees or hills. It does not work as well on sloping structures like beaches. In a situation where there is a relatively flat and featureless beach leading up to a dense, vertical surface like a hillside or forest, the radar operator can be fooled into thinking that the land surface is several hundred feet further away than it is. In these cases, the radar image has to be coordinated with charts and dept sounder to determine the true location. While charts do have some contour lines that may indicate the height and grade of the land, trying to interpret this at night with limited visibility can be tricky. More information can often be determined by changing range scales or adjusting gain, if possible. **The width of the radar beam can join contacts together on the screen, resulting in confusing or misleading images.**

RADAR TRAINING

Although there is no requirement for radar training for recreational boaters or even for entry-level master's license, operational training is available at a reasonable cost. The choices are online, classroom or home-schooling.

The Starpath School of Navigation is the premier recreational boating radar class. Its programs are available on-line or through their classroom courses in Seattle. In-class courses at Starpath are on hiatus throughout 2009 while the school focuses on its online curriculum, but should be up and running again thereafter.

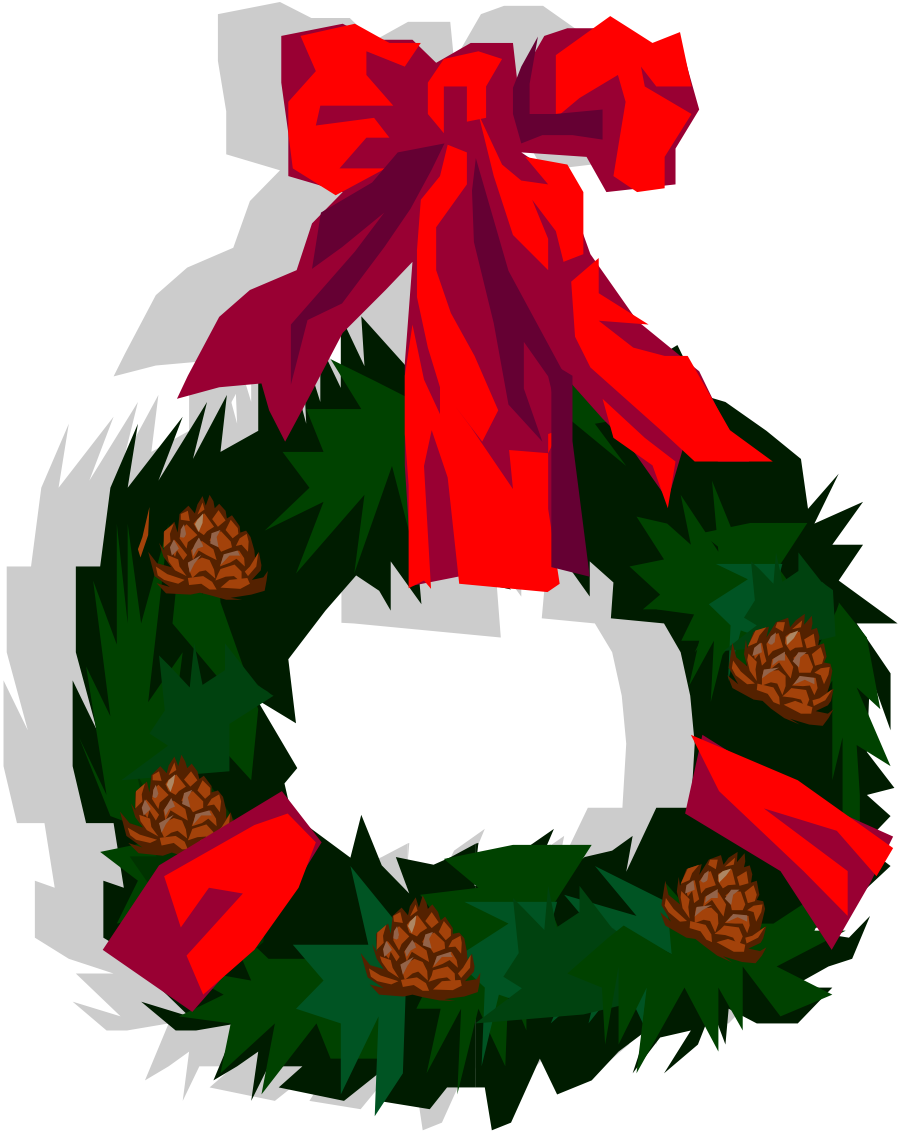
If the trip to Seattle is not in your plans, the American Sailing Association has introduced a Radar Endorsement to their program. Taught by instructors using the Starpath course materials and software, the course does require that you have completed some prerequisite sailing courses, but for a power boater willing to forgo the benefits of ASA certification, some schools may make an exception.

The United States Power and Sail Squadrons also offer a course in radar, but the material is still fairly new and the course may be difficult to find. The organization offers a home study course that is available to the public, but neither of these courses is designed to have live or simulated radar.

Finally, there are the radar operator classes offered by professional mariner schools. While these may be seen as overkill and are usually more expensive than the recreational boater classes, they are an alternative if you learn better with a live instructor. Generally speaking, radar operator classes will require about three days for a "rivers only" class, designed for towboat operators, or five days for an ocean course.

Whatever program you choose, the most important goal is to become familiar with the radar system's limitations. The results will improve your boat handling, increase your safety and maybe even keep you out of court.

Frank Mummert spent 15 years in the Navy where he taught nuclear engineering. He is a licensed captain. Currently he teaches sailing, and for the last two years has served as an instructor for sailors trying to obtain their captain's licenses through the Mariner's School, which is headquartered in Princeton, NJ.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! in our NEW HOME!!

Marina West Yacht Club
2009 Calendar of Events

JANUARY

10 Change of Watch
11 Board Meeting & Brunch
31 Crab Feed

FEBRUARY

2 PICYA Delegates Meeting
14 Chocolate & Wine Festival
20 Board/General Meeting
21 PICYA Leadership Conference
28 Train Trip

MARCH

2 PICYA Delegates Meeting
13-15 Caliente YC Cruise Out
15 Board Meeting

APRIL

6 PICYA Delegates Meeting
17-19 Driftwood YC Cruise Out
19 Board Meeting
25 Opening Day on the Delta

MAY

2-3 Delta Loop
4 PICYA Delegates Meeting
15 Board/General Meeting
23-25 Dinghy Cruises

JUNE

1 PICYA Delegates Meeting
12 Board & General Meeting
13 Ladies Day—Judy Dretzka

JULY

6 PICYA Delegates Meeting
11 Taste of the Delta
13 Board Meeting

AUGUST

3 PICYA Delegates Meeting
7-9 Commodore Island Cruise Out
9 Board Meeting
23 Brunch at Humphries

SEPTEMBER

7 PICYA Delegates Meeting
11-13 Devils Isle Cruise Out
13 Board Meeting
26 Wheelchair Regatta Encinal YC

OCTOBER

3 Drift Wood Make- a- Wish
3-11 Bay Cruise
5 PICYA Delegates Meeting
16 Board & General Meeting
24 PICYA Management Conference
30-11-1 San Joaquin YC Cruise Out

NOVEMBER

2 PICYA Awards Dinner
13-15 Weber Point Cruise Out
15 Board Meeting

DECEMBER

5 Delta Reflections
6 Awards Banquet for Lighted Boats
12 Board Meeting
12 Christmas Party

JANUARY

The ANCHOR

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