

IOBG YACHT CLUB MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

Yacht Club History and Protocol

Prepared by IOBG District 15 Past President, Jeanne Irwin

I YACHT CLUB HISTORY

A. GENERAL

New York Yacht Club is believed to be the oldest yacht club in America, organized in 1844. In 1881, Lloyd's Register listed 21 American yacht clubs. In Southern California, the Santa Barbara YC is the oldest, dating back to 1872. San Francisco Yacht Club is California's oldest club formed in 1869.

B. SAN DIEGO CLUBS

There are currently 19 Yacht Clubs in San Diego, with half of those Clubs being Regular and Senior members of the San Diego Association of Yacht Clubs (SDAYC); 4 Associates; 3 Affiliate and 3 Liaison members.

Two San Diego yacht clubs have origins dating back to the 1800's. In 1886, our illustrious San Diego Yacht Club was formed. In 1889, the Chula Vista Yacht Club was formed. Lloyd's Register of Yacht Clubs listed San Diego YC as stationed at the foot of Hawthorne Street in San Diego Bay, being officially organized in 1905, entrance fee of twenty dollars and annual dues of twenty-four dollars. Chula Vista Yacht Club is listed as organized in 1900, with an entrance fee of five dollars and annual dues of four dollars. Both clubs actively engaged in racing in South San Diego Bay. (Montebello Cup, Chula Vista One Design and Lipton Cup)

Southwestern Yacht Club was formed in 1925 followed by Mission Bay YC in 1927. Coronado YC in 1932; Silver Gate YC in 1952; Oceanside YC in 1963; Navy Yacht Club of San Diego in 1964; Coronado Cays YC in 1972; Santa Margarita Sailing Club then Yacht Club in 1976; Cortez Racing in 1980; the reorganized Chula Vista Yacht Club in 1987 and Pt. Loma Yacht Club in 1994.

C. OPENING DAYS

Traditionally, yacht clubs in the eastern United States begin to prepare their boats and clubs for the new boating season after a long winter. Opening Day is the official opening of the boating season. It provides the opportunity for the members of the Yacht Club, and flag officers from other Clubs to participate in a traditional ceremony, followed by much socializing and good cheer. It is a day when we share camaraderie and proudly show off our beautiful Clubs and great members.

1. Diversity

It is with no uncertainty that you will notice a large amount of diversity as you travel up and down the coast to attend Opening Days. Everything from supreme lightness of the day, such as the tradition of raising a rubber chicken to the top of the Club house flag pole, to a formal wool black blazer at a Club steeped in Yacht Club traditions and history. Nonetheless, there should always be that common denominator or proper protocol guidelines.

2. Color Guard (National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance)

When a color guard is presenting the national colors, salutes are administered as follows:

SERVICE CAPS

When in uniform and wearing a service cap, stand and hand salute with straight wrist and hand, brought sharply to the bill of the cap when colors pass. Hold salute until colors are presented.

INFORMAL COVER OR NO COVER

Men remove cover and place right hand over heart as colors pass and hold until colors are presented. Women would not remove headgear, but would place their right hand over their heart.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

During the playing or singing of the national anthem, which may or may not coincide with the hoisting of the national flag, join the singing, raise hand salute if properly covered. Men in informal headgear should remove same and place right hand over heart. These actions should occur from first to final note.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Rise, hand salute or place right hand over heart, as appropriate to dress, and join in reciting the pledge, unless you find it necessary to refrain for religious beliefs of loyalty to another country.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

If you are introduced and in uniform or service cover, rise, salute and hold salute until it is returned or you are recognized and then be seated. It is your own Club's policy as to the procedure of remaining standing until your entire bridge has been introduced. An exception to this would be if the host master of ceremonies directs you otherwise. If you are somehow missed by the speaker, he or she will usually ask at the end of the introductions if they have missed anyone. At that time,

you would stand, state your Club first followed by your name, title and then salute.

Suggested protocol for the host club in handling guest introductions should be as follows:

- (1) Foreign dignitaries and special guests of the Club or the Commodore.
- (2) National dignitaries including military, political and national boating association guests.
- (3) State dignitaries including major associations such as SCYA or YRUSC.
- (4) Local dignitaries including county and city personnel and California Harbor Association officers.
- (5) Visiting yacht club and boating organization officers including International Order of the Blue Gavel.

No individual should be introduced more than once. One introduction is proper for the current highest rank the person holds or for the organization the person is representing on this occasion. An EXCEPTION to this would be at your own Club's Opening Day, i.e., a past Commodore or Committee Chair. Yet another exception: you are asked by another organization that you hold rank with to represent them at a particular opening day in attention to your current title.

D. AMERICA'S CUP

America's cup is competitive yachting's most prestigious prize. In 1851, one American Schooner, AMERICA, took on a fleet of 15 British schooners in a race around the Island of Wight. The prize for this historic race was a 27" tall, bottomless Victorian ewer wrought of 134 ounces of silver by Garrad's of London...then known as the One-hundred Guinea Cup. It was offered by the Royal Yacht Squadron of England to the successful yacht AMERICA. The cup became known as the America's cup in recognition of the yacht that first won it. Today, it is the oldest trophy in international sports.

II PROTOCOL

Protocol is based on tradition and in the modern world is a guide of conduct and etiquette used by ladies and gentlemen. It is our belief that yachtsmen are ladies and gentlemen, and as such wish to be proper when involved with yachts and yacht clubs.

Southern California Yachting Association (SCYA) has developed a handbook that addresses many of the protocol situations you might encounter. Their intent is to provide a reasonable set of procedures such that the reader may feel comfortable, as well as informed, in following them.

Nothing in that publication was intended to supersede long-tested local customs of any particular Club or organization, but rather a set of guidelines for customs and usage.

It is my belief that if you are going to play the game, play by the rules. Have fun, but always remember...you are the chosen representative from your Club and in many instances may be the only contact someone might have with your Club. ***Be the best you can be.***

A. RECIPROCALs and VISITING PROTOCOL (*see attached*).

B. BURGEE AND FLAT PROTOCOL (*see attached*).

C. DRESS UNIFORM

1. **Seasons: DISTRICT 15**

Blue/Gray from October 1st thru April 1st.
Blue/White from April 1st thru October 1st.

The LA clubs change to their whites in March. If you are invited to their opening day ceremonies, check the dress code...it usually will be whites

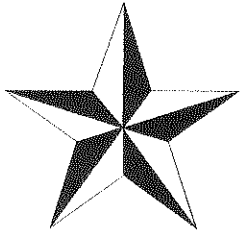
2. **Blazer/Dress Uniform (Marshall)**

3. **Shirts/Blouses**

4. **Trousers/Skirts**

5. **Flags**

RECIPROCALLS AND VISITING PROTOCOL



A yacht club is no different from a person's home with respect to guests. A club is owned and financed by its members primarily for their own use. There is nothing automatic about reciprocal privileges. Most yacht clubs in Southern California who reciprocate with other yacht clubs in the area will do so on a formal basis. This is typically done through an exchange of reciprocal cards which are approved and issued on an annual basis. This activity is between two specific clubs who wish to offer the mutual exchange of their facilities. Under no circumstances should a yachtsman assume that all yacht clubs are reciprocal and before requesting entrance to another club, should check with this club to ensure a reciprocal agreement exists. A prudent yachts person will make his/her visit to another club more enjoyable if he/she follows the simple rules of courtesy.

- ★ Verify you have reciprocal privilege.
- ★ Call ahead so the club can ensure space is available, and that your visit will not conflict with other club functions.
- ★ When making arrangements, ask about club and marina rules such as: do they allow pets, parties, have electrical service, etc.
- ★ ALWAYS sign the guest register.
- ★ Always have a current membership card from your club and be prepared to show it courteously to staff and members of the club you are visiting upon request.
- ★ Wear a name tag from your club.
- ★ Ask for a copy, or location, of club rules and observe them as the member of the club must, remember...you are their guest.
- ★ Always be courteous with club employees.
- ★ Patronize the facilities of the club.
- ★ When planning cruise-type visits, make arrangements early in the year with the appropriate officials.
- ★ Under no circumstances, board or make fast to any vessel unless specifically asked to or after obtaining permission.
- ★ Under no circumstances use hoses, stairs, mops or other materials belonging to the slip holder without permission.
- ★ Many skippers leave lines, particularly spring lines at their slips to assist in docking upon their return. Never use, and most particularly do not re-tie these lines, as your action could cause serious damage to vessels and crew.
- ★ Always follow good environmental practice consistent with the concerns for proper trash disposal and discharges from your vessel into the water.
- ★ Write a thank you note and mention any members or employees' who were particularly helpful.
- ★ If approaching by sea, fly your burgee.

Be a great ambassador of your Club and enjoy the camaraderie of using your yacht club reciprocals.

BURGEE AND FLAG PROTOCOL *

On a power boat, the burgee is flown from the bow staff and no other place. On a sailboat the proper place, per true tradition, is on a staff at the top of the foremast. In most cases, however, the mast top is littered with instruments and antenna, so the starboard spreader is the acceptable alternate location. It is flown at all times except when, in the judgement of the skipper, weather conditions are too severe.

The colors (the U.S. Flag) on both power and sailboats are most properly flown from the aft gaff or, in the absence of a gaff, from stern staff. A sailboat may fly the colors from the leach of the after sail when underway except when racing.

In the U.S. waters the yacht ensign is acceptable but not in foreign waters; documentation has nothing to do with it. The traditional 50 stars and stripes is always proper.

The hours of colors are 0800 to sunset. If the yacht will not be attended at sunset, the colors may be lowered earlier. When entering or leaving a harbor, colors may be flown earlier than 0800 if the light, in the judgement of the skipper is adequate.

There is a third American flag called the Union Jack. This has a blue field with 50 stars. On civilian vessels the Union Jack may be flown from a jack staff aft off the bow on Sundays, holidays or anytime regatta flags are flown. Hours are the same as for the other American flags.

We now need to cover officer flags or the owner's private signal (house flag). Traditionally this flag is flown from the Masthead on power boats, but usually on modern boats is flown from the starboard spreader. On sailboats with two masts, by tradition, this signal is flown from the aftermost mast or, on a single masted vessel, from the top of the main mast in lieu of the burgee.

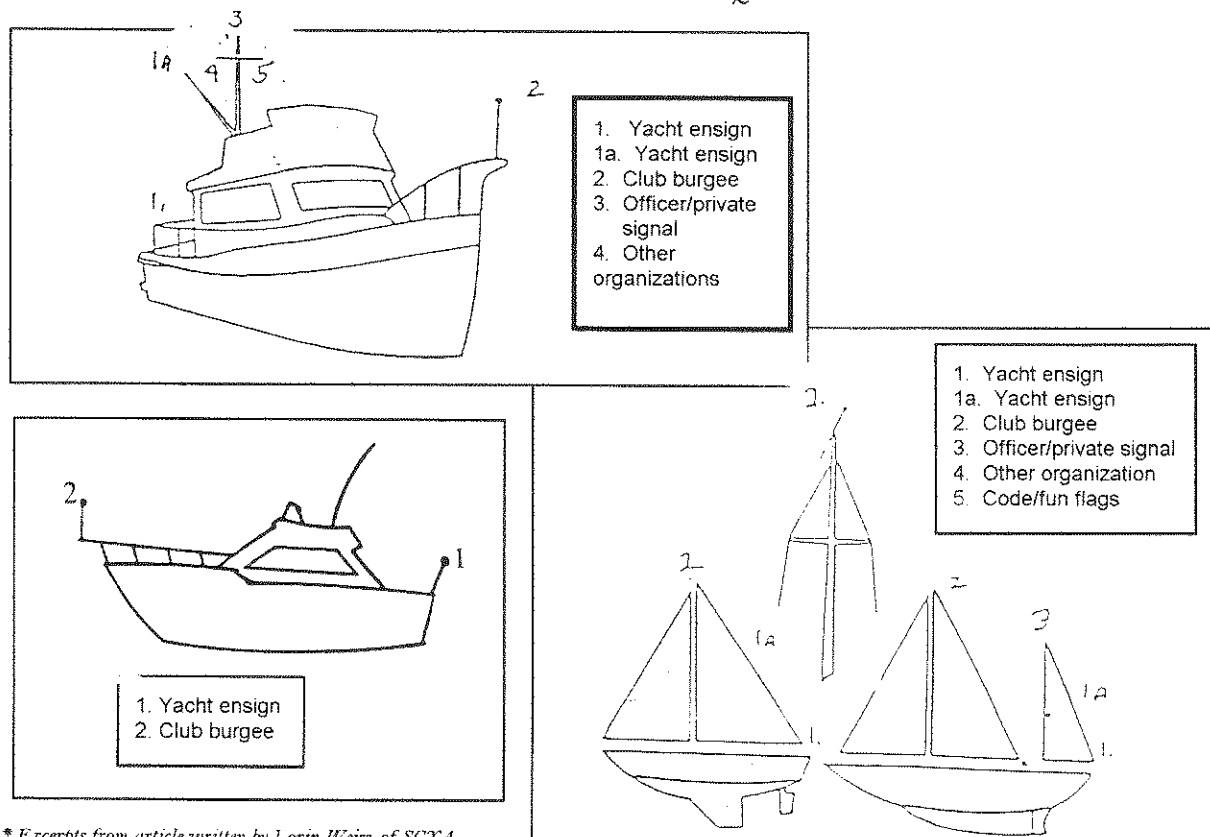
By modern standards the officers flag, or private signal, is flown under the burgee from the starboard spreader. The port spreader may be used for fun flags.

Regatta flags are flown only while at anchor and not underway unless otherwise directed by the Commodore.

The hours for regatta flags are from 0800 to sundown. They go from the water at the bow over the mainmast to the aft mast (if any) to the water at the stern. Usually the flags touch the water and are weighted at the bow by a bottle of champagne and at the stern by a shackle.

Regatta flags are the ship's signal flags flown in the following sequence. Starting from forward: AB2, UJ1, KE3, GH6, IV5, FL4, DM7, PO 3rd repeater, RN 1st repeater, ST ZERO, CX9, WQ8, ZY 2nd repeater; then start over.

If you need more information, please refer to CHAPMAN'S NAUTICAL GUIDES, BOATING ETIQUETTE.



* Excerpts from article written by Lorin Weiss, of SCTA.

RANK EMBLEMS AND FLAGS

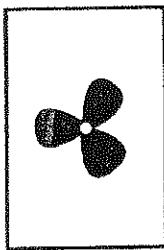
Office	Device	Flag	Office	Device	Flag
Commodore ☆☆☆ 3 Gold Stars		White fouled anchor in a circle of 13 white stars on a blue field.	Port Captain 		White fouled anchor on a blue field.
Vice Commodore ☆☆ 2 Gold Stars		White fouled anchor in a circle of 13 white stars on a red field.	Gold Fouled Anchor worn vertically 		Blue fouled anchor on a white field.
Rear Commodore ☆ 1 Gold Star		Red fouled anchor in a circle of 13 red stars on a white field.	Fleet Captain Fleets Captain 		A white chevron on a blue field.
Staff Commodore Past Commodore ☆☆☆ 3 Silver Stars		White fouled anchor set to the right of three white vertical stars on a blue field.	Director/Trustees 		A red fouled anchor with white letters R and C on a blue field.
Treasurer 		White Acorn on a blue field.	Race Committee RC Gold "R.C."		White crossed quills on a blue field.
Secretary 		White Oak Leaf on a blue field.	Judge Advocate 		Horizontal yellow bar running from hoist to tail on a white field.
			Measurer 		Gold Bar

Office

Device

Flag

Power Fleet
Captain

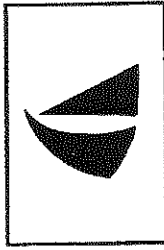


Red 3 blade propeller
on white field.

Gold Propeller



Sail Fleet



Red sails on a white
field.

Fleet Surgeon



White caduceus on a
solid blue field.

Gold caduceus

Fleet Nurse



White Cross on blue
field.

Red Cross/Gold Lamp

Chaplain



White cross or tablets
on a blue field.

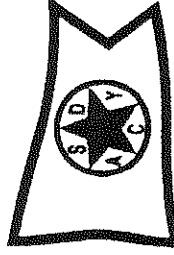
Gold cross/or tablets

Quartermaster

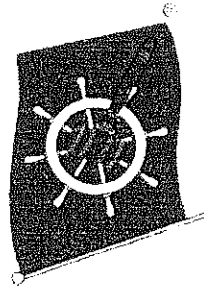


White on blue field.

Gold X-Keys



San Diego Association of Yacht Clubs



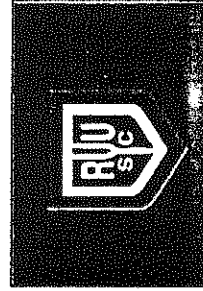
International Order of the
Blue Gavel,
Association of Past Commodores



Recreational Boaters of
California



Southern California Yachting
Association



Yacht Racing Union of
Southern California

Membership Overview

As presented for YRUSC Seminar

*Prepared by
Jeanne A. Irwin*

Staff Commodore: San Diego Association of Yacht Clubs; Chula Vista Yacht Club
IOBG District 15 Past President; SCYA Honorary Commodore

It seems unlikely anyone in this room today would challenge the notion that a strong membership is an essential element of any successful yacht club. Equally apparent is where such a membership exists, it did not just happen by chance.

So, now and then, it behooves us to analyze or “sharpen our focus” on what we are doing to **KEEP** existing members and what we ought to be doing to **ATTRACT** new members.

WHAT MAKES A YACHT CLUB APPEALING?

What prompts current members to stick with, or prospective members to consider any yacht club and those things which make them **WANT TO BELONG**.

LOCATION: Certainly a prime factor. In our busy world, convenient access is a requirement for many to make use of their time on the water.

REPUTATION: Some prospective members may choose a yacht club based on the perceived prestige of that club and what value that may be to them.

AFFILIATIONS: What accredited affiliations are associated with this club. Racing: inter-club/yachting world links (local Associations, YRUSC, SCYA, cruising/angling clubs, etc.)

AMENITIES: Storage, boat lifts, yacht club owned slips, full service club, security.

ACTIVITIES: Active Junior Program, Racing, Social, Cruisers, Angling, and tournaments.

Those are just a few of the items that might entice or prompt individuals or families to become members.

WHAT CAN WE DO AS MANAGEMENT

Let's start **BEFORE** they join the Club. It is impossible to over emphasize the importance of their first meeting with personnel at the perspective Club of interest. If the Club Manager or available Club Officer, is unable to answer questions in a pleasing manner or acts as if it is a waste of time to show this prospective member around the Club...one word, **TROUBLE**. This might be the **ONLY** contact that this potential member had or ever will have with that particular club.

There is one thing that any prospective member wants to do and that is **BELONG**...belong to an organization which supports their particular needs and likes. A friendly group is one of the greatest pulses of any club. The new member has joined with all the expectations of joining a group of people with a common interest in boating and other yacht club related activities. *Does your Club emit a feeling of friendliness or heavy cliques.*

So what goes amiss?

Are we doing all we can do?

What causes a member to make a substantial investment in initiation dues and then walk away from the club within a year or two?

TOUGH QUESTIONS! But think again about why that member joined in the first place...they wanted to **BELONG**. Whether it was for particular boating activities, social interaction, a place for family relaxation and fun, or a combination of those things, it is likely their expectations were not realized. **WHY???**

Did the Board do enough to reach out to new members?

Did they sponsor activities specifically designed to welcome and encourage new members? Mixers, BBQ's, dinners, etc.?

Provide a mentor for a month?

Develop specific plans to help or encourage new members to get involved with on-going activities, and to foster a feeling of being in a place where they want to spend time.

In too many cases, the answer is too often a surprising **NO**. They get their welcome wagon brochures and burgee but then are left to read monthly newsletters to find out what is going on at the Club.

After the initial meeting mentioned earlier, the next person that the new member might meet is the **COMMODORE**. Wow, what an impressive title, huh? **AND HOW OFTEN** misused. Worse case scenario: A Commodore that acts too busy and too above it all to spend much more than a nod with this new member. Wouldn't it be the perfect scenario if that Commodore would ask the new member to join him for dinner one night via a personal phone call? Would that member not feel important and embraced into the Club?

Certainly one of the best ways of maintaining members is a **mentor program**, asking another club officer or a valued member to extend such an invitation. Where a member of the Board takes the time to call on the new member and ask how things are going and if he or she can answer any questions they may have. Many clubs adopt the plan at yacht club dinners such as Opening Day dances, etc., that Board members spread out so that one is at each table interacting with members.

Another potential bad situation to be vigilant of is when a member signs up for a committee and the committee chair does not follow through. Did the Board do enough to reach out to an apparently disillusioned existing member? Take early, personal interest when *previously active members* begin to show evidence of disinterest or disenchantment with "things" at the club. Perhaps establish a peer contact plan, where a core of long-standing, congenial members are made aware of members who seem to be drifting free of their chosen club. Include in this plan specific plans/steps for encouraging their return to the fold.

IT IS ALL ABOUT HOW WE AS A YACHT CLUB are making **ALL** of the members feel. Do we reach out and include them as part of our club, or just someone that we are content to have dues paid. Sometimes a club puts so much emphasis on getting **NEW** members, we forget about those members that have been long standing in their support. Have an old-timers dinner once in a while to give them a warm embrace for staying and supporting the club.

So what after all these strongholds, a member still resigns...follow through with a letter or a phone call as to inquire why this decision was made. Always follow up with a letter thanking them and telling them they will be

missed if they do resign. This creates goodwill and perhaps insight to the Board. AND who knows, that member might come back!

Some Clubs set up booths at local boat shows and open houses. Open houses work well where the yacht club is at a marina that is not yacht club owned. There may be a boater that has brought his boat into that marina and would take the opportunity to come in for an hour or so to be shown the Club and what it has to offer.

Remember, word of mouth can be either very instrumental or destructive. If someone comes to your Club on a reciprocal basis and is not treated in the spirit of camaraderie, the word **DOES** get around. Take the case of a cruiser that is already a member of a yacht club but within a year or so will need to relocate because of business and join another Club. Would your Club be the one they choose based on first impressions?

EVERY club ebbs and flows, depending on the economy, but in too many cases, membership is loss due to internal issues. **BE VIGILANT AND NEVER TAKE A MEMBER FOR GRANTED!** That means new members or long time members! It goes without saying, you will never please every member, but the results will be amazing if you try.

WHAT MAKES AN ACTIVE MEMBER ACTIVE?

Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented that your name is on the list.
Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock?
Or do you just meet in private and criticize and knock.

Do you take an active part to help the work along?
Or are you satisfied to be the kind that just belongs.
Do you work on committees, to this there is no trick?
Or leave the work to just a few, and talk about the clique?

Please come to the meetings often, and help with hand and heart.
Don't be just a member, but take an active part.
Think this over members; you know what's right from wrong.

Anonymous