

Tips For Smart Boating

Following these few simple safety tips could save a life—yours or that of a passenger:

- Don't drink and boat. Designate a driver.
- Wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved PFD.
- Check the weather and water forecasts before and after leaving shore. Avoid adverse weather.
- Limit the number of passengers in a small boat. Check the capacity plate.
- Have visual distress devices approved by the Coast Guard.
- Use the "one-third rule" of fuel management: one-third to go, one-third to get back and one-third for reserve.
- Tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back. Better yet, leave a float plan.
- Sign up for a safe boating course. Contact the local Coast Guard Auxiliary or Power Squadron or call 1-800-336-BOAT for the class nearest you.

About The Cover...

A scene east of the Holden Beach Bridge on the mainland side of the Intracoastal Waterway was the inspiration for the Vic Gillespie painting from which the front cover was reproduced. Vic Gillespie brings a national reputation as a fine artist to Brunswick County. His work is included in many private and corporate collections. Along with Andy Griffith and composer Leonis McGlohon, Gillespie's works of art were showcased in the "I like calling North Carolina Home" state promotional campaign. He is also involved with many wildlife and conservation causes, and has donated many paintings to these. Gillespie and his wife, Barbara, live on Holden Beach, and Memorial Day weekend will open the Upper Deck Art Gallery in the Holden Beach Marina.

Island Living

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Play It Safe And Enjoy Your Day On The Water

BY SUSAN USHER

What better way could there be to spend a summer afternoon than cruising in the family boat?

Boating's an increasingly popular pastime across the South Brunswick Islands. That's evident as thousands of vessels of all shapes and sizes—and thousands of boaters with varying levels of experience—take to the water in pursuit of fun and recreation.

For many, a day on a boat, with the sun shining, a breeze blowing and the boat gently rocking in the water sounds like pure relaxation—the ideal escape from a fast-paced weekday life.

Cletus Waldmiller's 24-foot Bayliner, *My Queen Elizabeth*, looks like the right kind of boat for that kind of day.

On this particular afternoon, however, the boat—new to Waldmiller—is at its moorings near Calabash, undergoing a courtesy examination by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary's Shallotte Flotilla. Jim and Anne Hesser and Adrienne Toler methodically go down a checklist before Jim Hesser pulls out the colorful sticker that says the boat is properly equipped for fun and safety on the water.

Last year the Flotilla exceeded its 250-examination quota and is aiming to conduct at least 270 this year.

On the opposite side of the boat is a red sticker, proof Waldmiller has paid a federal use tax. Last year, said he and Hesser, the U.S. Coast Guard didn't issue citations to boats that had not paid the controversial tax. Boaters don't like the tax because the money collected isn't used to help boating; it goes into the general budget. This year, said Hesser and Waldmiller, recreational boaters who haven't paid the fee, which varies according to boat size, will be issued citations and could be levied a fine of up to \$5,000.

Waldmiller is a past commander of the Shallotte River U.S. Power



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

IT PASSED! Jim Hesser (right), past commander of the Shallotte Flotilla, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, places a safety exam sticker on the windshield of the *My Queen Elizabeth*, as owner Clete Waldmiller, past commander of the Shallotte River Power

Squadron, while Hesser is a long-time Squadron member as well as a past commander of the Auxiliary's Shallotte Flotilla. Both organizations promote safe and courteous boating.

While the number of pleasure boats plying the waters off Brunswick County is increasing, Waldmiller said local boaters are fortunate, because local waterways are not nearly as crowded as those in some areas, such as Annapolis, Md., or farther up the East Coast.

But area waters are not without problems of their own.

Two of the boating-related problems Waldmiller and Hesser see most often locally are drinking and driving, and speeding.

Often the two are related. "Drinking usually leads to speeding and reckless driving," said Hesser.

Last year, more than 1,000 people drowned in boating accidents nationwide.

Saturday, the most popular day of the week for boating, also has the most accidents, according to the National Safe Boating Council.

"That's one of the beauties of being retired," says Waldmiller. "I don't go out on the weekends."

Most boating accidents happen on calm water, when visibility is good.

And more accidents occur between 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. than any other time of the day.

How does it happen? What can a boater do to reduce the odds?

Stressors—such as fatigue from sun and wind exposure, engine noise, vibration and constant boat

motion and alcohol—combine late in the afternoon to make boaters less careful, less able to respond to danger.

Natural risk factors may include wind, weather and navigational hazards.

But the biggest hazards to boating safety can be controlled: use of alcohol, speeding and failure to use personal flotation devices (PFDs).

For the boater interested in learning safety on the water, local units of both the U.S. Power Squadron and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary offer safe boating courses that address these topics and others, such as boat handling and seamanship, anchors and anchoring, trailering, weather, equipment, state and federal regulations, charts and aids to navigation, marlinspike, basics of navigation, piloting, navigation rules and radio telephone.

The classes are voluntary now, and taught by volunteers. However, with boating's increasing popularity and overcrowding of waterways, that may change as well.

"We think safety classes are going to be mandatory soon," said Mrs. Hesser.

For more information on the Power Squadron, contact Commander Charles L. Lambert of Shallotte, 754-5675, or Education Officer Carr H. Parsons of Sunset Beach, 579-0718, or any member.

For more information on the Coast Guard Auxiliary, contact John Fletcher of the Holden Beach area regarding courtesy inspections, or Bill Grancsay, public information officer, for general information, 754-8599, or any member.



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