

CBYCA YACHT CLUB TRADITIONS AND PROTOCOLS

Doing things well in a consistent and proper fashion is a way of showing pride in yourself, your club, and your boating hobby as well as showing respect to your fellow yachtsmen on your voyages. Also, traditions and protocols allow us to run events smoothly, effectively mark special occasions, and provide connection back to our founders and forward to the next generation. To this end, the CBYCA collects, monitors, and exchanges information about traditions and protocols of interest to member clubs. Listed below (in no particular order) are answers to commonly asked questions and information that we feel you and your yacht club will find useful.

Captain Protocol: Term for an appointed CBYCA officer, committee, or article concerned with yacht club customs, traditions, practices, and protocols – sort of a “Manners Guide” for the Membership offering friendly advice on such grave matters as how to where it, fly it or say it or where the Queen might sit at openings.

Nameplate Etiquette: Yacht clubs love tradition and one of the great traditional rules is “right rank”. Just as you wear the collar pin of the office you hold on the right, so also belongs the corresponding badge. So, if you are dressed to represent your office as Secretary of XYZ Yacht Club, then your XYZ Yacht Club badge is worn on the right, while your CBYCA, Power Squadron, PRYCA, CCC, DRYL, etc. badges are worn on the left. How many badges are worn is up to the wearer or the parent organization. If you wear more than one badge on the right side (maybe because you ran out of space on your jacket) the badge corresponding to the office you are representing should be the highest. Badges should be worn above pockets but devices on the pocket are OK when multiple devices are worn – the idea is to look balanced. An often heard problem among yacht club folks is “my badge sags on my shirt, what can I do?” The trick the military types typically use is to cut out some stiff material from something like a gift box, place it behind the shirt material, and pin the badge through it – takes a bit of practice to get right – don’t pick a color that shows through the shirt.

Flags: Why worry about where and how flags are flown? Well, before radio and electric lights, flags were how boats communicated at a distance and have become the traditional way that boats tell something of themselves, the owners, and the guests on board. There are many complications and variations but the main rule to remember is the “right rank” rule. So what rank is right for your boat? It is the one that corresponds to the “official” burgee flown at the bow (power only) or masthead (sail or power). Sailboats may also fly the boat’s “official” burgee on a Starboard hoist. “Official” in this case means the club or organization that you want your boat to represent. It is usually your home yacht club but may be changed for reasons such as cruising with another club to which you belong.

The flags you fly to Starboard represent the offices of all aboard corresponding to your “official” club burgee or organization flag. Flags flown to Port are, in general, any other burgees or office flags of the owners or guests aboard the boat. Always remember to group the burgees and offices together. For example, you should expect to see the Ventnor YC burgee with a Commodore flag under it followed by the Bristol YC with the CBYCA Delegate flag if the Ventnor Commodore and the Bristol Delegate or Alternate were aboard that boat. To put the flags and burgees in the right order, remember “place higher in order of rank” and “higher in order of most to least represented”. For example, club office flags of any rank are flown above the Past Commodore Flag because Past Commodore is a personal flag vs. the many represented by a club office flag. Another example is that DRYL or PRYCA, flag, representing area organizations, would be flown above club burgees. An NBF flag, representing a national organization, would be flown above and CBYCA regional flag. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rules. Also be aware of additional rules of other organizations such as the U.S. Power Squadrons and Coast Guard Auxiliary. For detailed flag guidance, there are many good references such as *CHAPMANS* and the U.S. Power Squadrons guide.

Saluting: Naval etiquette for men or women permits salutes only in uniform and only when covered (i.e. when a hat is worn). When uncovered in uniform or in civilian attire, proper naval etiquette requires coming to attention but no salute. When uncovered in uniform or when in civilian attire, salute the U.S. Flag with hand over heart.

There is a strong desire by many to salute the Bridge (or Quarterdeck) Officer during a yacht club ceremony, hat or no hat. Among many CBYCA clubs, it has become acceptable, when in uniform, to salute the Bridge Officer when “Coming Aboard” during indoor ceremonies where hats are not worn. Host clubs desiring greater formality with strict adherence to naval etiquette should remind their guests in invitations and flyers that representing officials in uniform are requested to wear hats during introductions. On such occasions, host club officer(s) manning the Bridge also should also be wearing hats to properly receive the salutes. Those who are not comfortable with salutes can show respect to the host club by pausing at attention for a moment at the appropriate spot. Never respond with a salute unless one is given to you.

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General Etiquette: When attending or participating in any club event, the chief thing to keep in mind either as a visitor or club member is to act with courtesy and respect to others. There are times when we wish to mark a special occasion though certain customs, traditions, and protocols. Even if some of these things may be common sense to you personally, keep in mind that each ceremony we attend is special and unique to the host club, it's organizers, and honored guests and that we should always work together to ensure the occasion is the best it can be for everyone involved. Please consider the following points next time you attend a function:

1. When someone is speaking, be quiet and attentive to the speaker. If you must carry on a conversation during a speech, withdraw from the ceremony area. Although everyone is anxious and antsy by the time the Commodore speaks, remember that this is a special and unique moment for the host club and its members. On the other hand, we are there to celebrate fun and good fellowship on the water which means a certain amount of conversation and "carrying-on" is fine as long it does not detract from, delay, or disrupt the ceremony.
2. Always dress appropriately for the occasion, especially if you will be part of the ceremony. If you are wearing a yacht club traditional or blazer uniform, ensure it is complete and properly worn. For example, there should be no shirttails out and no mismatched clothing such as a uniform shirt with gym pants or shorts. Never insult the host club or embarrass your own club by being introduced and rendering honors in sloppy, inappropriate, or improper attire. Only in the most unusual circumstances, such as fighting a boat fire (this really happened at Bodkin Yacht Club during their 2000 Flag Raising) is there a good excuse not to look your best.
3. If you want to make a humorous gesture or demonstration, check with the folks running the ceremony first. It is very rude to do what you want without first checking with the host. Act with restraint. This is a judgment area. The more far out you are the more likely you might offend some of the folks in attendance. For presentations at the podium of a plaque, burgee, etc., you need not check with the hosts first unless you are planning something extreme. When in doubt, ask first.
4. **BE ON TIME.** Allow time to register – the hosts are working hard to keep things organized. Be at the starting line when needed. Don't make the hosts have to herd you into position. If you are late, never demand special consideration. The hosts will line you up at their convenience and in their way, not yours. There is no alphabetical precedence for late arrivals.
5. **NO LAST MINUTE SPECIAL REQUESTS.** For example, if you have to speak or be introduced out of order, work it out with the host club well ahead of time. Recently, **BUS GROUPS** have become a disruptive problem at some club affairs. **BUS GROUPS** should not just show up and expect special treatment - contact the host club at least a day ahead of time!
6. Host clubs must **START ON TIME AND KEEP THE CEREMONY MOVING**, especially if there are multiple events that day at different clubs that many of the guests will be attending. In turn, if the events are reasonably scheduled and coordinated, guests should stay for the entire ceremony. Try to remain, to the maximum practical extent (it can get hot and nature calls), in the VIP seating area until the ceremony is over.

Uniforms and Attire: In addition to guidance found elsewhere in this book, keep the following pointers in mind:

1. **Shorts:** Shorts can be part of the traditional yacht club uniform. Dress shorts are acceptable for men or women as long as they match the rest of the uniform (color, texture, weave, material, etc.). They should have belt loops and pockets and be worn with a white uniform belt and buckle. If your club likes cuffed uniform shorts, then all should wear cuffed shorts – no mixing. Most of the world's Navies have a shorts uniform (the Brits look especially sharp) and the U.S. Navy has had it from time to time. Whatever your club chooses to do, make every effort to have your representatives match each other (unless they are dressed in the uniform of another organization). An exception to this is that men may wear long pants while women wear shorts or skirts. However, on such an occasion, the women should match each other (i.e. shorts OR pants OR skirts – no mixing).
2. **Skirts:** For women, skirts are always appropriate and are preferred for formal occasions with ankle length skirts worn for the most formal occasions.
3. **Non-traditional uniforms:** Clubs with non-traditional yacht club uniforms (e.g. blazers and slacks) may elect to follow the same rules and protocols (e.g. saluting and hat, no hat - if your club uniform has a hat) as clubs with traditional naval style uniforms. Otherwise, they should follow "civilian" protocols.

4. **Civilian Attire:** Normal civilian protocols always apply, even if you are a part of the ceremony. Men remove hats indoors, during the National Anthem, and memorial for the departed. No saluting unless you really feel it is appropriate. If you are introduced and “come aboard” as part of the ceremony, you should be dressed in appropriate attire that is respectful of the host club and the ceremony. Civilians “coming aboard” should use the hand over heart salute for the ensign and pause at attention before the OOD. To avoid awkwardness, you may wish to “request permission to come aboard”, after which the OOD responds with “come aboard”.
5. **Uniform of the Day:** Your Commodore or senior officer attending determines your club uniform of the day and should ensure that your club wears attire that is appropriate and respectful. Except when an individual is dressed to match the uniform of another organization, your club representatives should match each other to the maximum extent practical.

Honor Guard Salute in Group: Only the senior person in the group returns the honor guard salute. The reasons for the senior person only salute to an honor guard are: 1) Salutes, as a matter of courtesy, are always returned, 2) As each yacht club group passes through, the honor guard is rendering honor to the organization, not the individuals passing through, 3) The senior person acts on behalf of the organization, and 4) The individuals passing through form a unit representing their organization – the senior person acts on behalf of the unit (e.g. like an army platoon leader saluting on behalf of his platoon). This interpretation is also consistent with the commonly practiced yacht club custom that only the senior officer salutes the bridge while the rest of the group lines up, followed by a step forward out of formation where each individual salutes when introduced and recognized.

Please note that the senior person holds the salute until exiting the Honor Guard formation. The Honor Guard holds the salute until the last person in the organization has exited the Honor Guard formation. Under no circumstances should the Honor Guard drop their salute before the senior person has dropped their salute.

Coming Aboard and Rendering Honors: Another yacht club custom (often used for Opening Day/Flag Raising), which reflects nautical and naval traditions, is the approach to the Bridge to render honors. The speakers stand, usually near the yardarm when outdoors, represents the Bridge (or Quarterdeck) of the host club where the Officer of the Deck (OOD) is standing watch. In yacht club ceremonies, the OOD is the officer who accepts and returns salutes and other courtesies as well as granting the visitors the traditional permission to come aboard. The OOD is usually not the Master of Ceremonies because it is awkward to run the show and also be in it. At opening ceremonies, the OOD is usually the Commodore.

The typical yacht club ceremony follows the naval tradition of coming aboard ship where the ensign (U.S. Flag) is saluted at the top of the gangway, and then the OOD is saluted with a request for permission to come aboard. Unlike when passing as a group through the honor guard, all salute (if covered and in uniform) the ensign because ranks are temporarily broken to “cross the gangway”. The unit reforms on the Bridge (or Quarterdeck) to be introduced by the senior officer. The individual does not salute until they called from ranks to be recognized. If not in uniform, a person may salute the ensign with hand over heart or by pausing, facing the ensign, and coming to attention. The group salute often seen at the end of a visiting club introduction and remarks is a formal rendering of honors from a group in formation and provides for a graceful (hopefully) and ceremonious exit. The group salute is reminiscent of the naval tradition of “manning the rails” where passing ships exchange group salutes of crew members assembled at attention on the side facing a passing ship or place of honor. The senior officer of the group leads the salute with the words “XYZ Yacht Club, Hand Salute”. The group salutes in unison on the word “salute”. The senior officer then says “Ready, two” On the word “two” the group drops salute, turns, and always follows the Commodore or senior officer off the quarterdeck. The Commodore or senior officer will usually lead the group toward a VIP seating area or toward the beverage cooler, where the host club has refreshments available, especially on hot days.

Precedence of Past Commodores: Line up and introduce oldest to newest. The Immediate Past Commodore (IP/C) should be last. However, many clubs introduce the IP/C after current officers because the IP/C is a current Board Member. This is appropriate, but a yacht club tradition often observed is to put the IP/C last to remind him or her their glory year at the head of the line is over and it is time to eat humble pie as the newest “has-been”.

Women’s Hat Protocol: Whenever men in uniform wear hats, women in uniform should also wear hats. When in uniform and participating in a ceremony, women should remove hats (AKA “uncover”) for the same occasions as men. Typically, these occasions occur during invocations with an announcement made to “please uncover.” Hats should be worn and a salute rendered when the American Flag is raised or lowered, after the National Anthem is played, and when TAPS is played. As with the men’s hat, the women’s hat, when removed, should be tucked under the left arm. These protocols are consistent with U.S. Navy protocol.

Queens and Princesses: There are many traditions and protocols governing queens and princesses and it would take a book to cover them all. What follows are answers to some often asked questions:

For CBYCA clubs, the Ball protocol is to provide free attendance for the Queen of the Chesapeake and her escort. Free attendance or reduced prices for all other “royalty” is at the discretion of the host club and the Commodore of the host club.

In all other respects, CBYCA clubs should treat visiting queens and princesses of any outside club or organization in the world exactly as they would treat their own queen and princesses. For example, traditionally, queens are introduced after visiting clubs, princesses, and organizations, sit at the head table, are asked to speak, and receive yellow flowers (often roses).

As for dress, queens and princesses from non-CBYCA clubs and organizations should follow their own protocols (as long as the attire is appropriate for the occasion – most CBYCA club balls are traditionally very formal). As hosts, CBYCA clubs recognize, respect, and celebrate the traditions and protocols of guest clubs and organizations. Princesses of visiting clubs that are also members of the CBYCA (this is common with clubs in the DRYL and PRYCA), may follow either CBYCA or their own protocols, but we suggest consideration be given to the special regional identity provided their “home” organization.

“Royal” persons of various organizations around the world often wear sashes. Matching sashes are sometimes provided as part of the Queen of the Chesapeake contest. We recommend CBYCA Club Princesses wear sashes that include their club name as part of their official attire. A nice tradition practiced by clubs of the DRYL and recently by clubs of the CBYCA is for the princesses to wear unique sashes in club colors. The Queen of the Chesapeake and the Queen of the DRYL always wear sashes.

If a visiting queen wants to wear white, we are not aware of any conflicting protocol and suggest it is quite appropriate because white is the traditional Chesapeake Bay color for queens and the host club princess.

Please check with Maryland Yacht Club, the sponsoring club of the Queen of the Chesapeake contest, but it is our understanding that the princess of any CBYCA member club may compete, regardless of the club’s location. HOWEVER, if your club princess wins, she must perform the traditional duties of the Queen of the Chesapeake, which will keep her and her supporting cast (parents, commodore, etc.) in the Chesapeake Bay region almost every weekend.

King the Chesapeake: Originated and sponsored by Marley Boat Club, the “King” started as a typical summer silly thing to do. The “King” has since evolved into a Goodwill Ambassador who appears at events during the year of his reign “blessing” his subjects with sheets of toilet paper. The “King’s” costume is something to see as each “King” from the year before adds something to it. The “King” is well respected because it takes a lot of courage for a fellow to be the entertainment for his friends. More over it takes dedication to attend so many functions spreading goodwill.

Queen of the Galley Slaves: The female equivalent of the “King of the Chesapeake”. The Galley Slaves, a long-standing informal association of lady boaters, sponsors the “Queen”, who is selected by contest at the annual summer gathering of the Galley Slaves. The “Queen” is noted for her colander “crown”, celebrating the Galley Slaves’ lofty status as provider of sustenance for hungry crews. The “Queen” serves as a Goodwill Ambassador for a Year, appears at parties and club events, and blesses her male subjects with an uncooked spaghetti noodle.

Clock of the Bay: A clock that is passed from club to club. Intended to promote fun and good fellowship, the Clock of the Bay is obtained when at least ten card-carrying members of a CBYCA club appear at the club that possesses the Clock. After much frivolity at the old club, the clock is taken to the new club and is displayed as a challenge to other clubs to come by and claim it. Rumor has it that more than one Clock is circulating out there.

Queen of the Narrows: Male Goodwill Ambassador sponsored by Kent Island Yacht Club and selected at an annual summer contest. This “Queen” is known to embody the spirit of elegance and beauty, and can be quite striking in appearance. In fact, many are struck temporarily blind and speechless when “she” appears.

Club Operation Pointers:

When it comes to clubs and organizations, a check of CBYCA Board resumes shows a wealth of experience and knowledge that we are more than happy to pass on. Even when we don't know the answer, we usually know how to find out. We often get questions such as "how should a club run" or "is my XYZ Yacht Club doing it the right way?" The following are some general comments in response to questions that we are often asked:

For any corporation, club, or society (as defined by *Robert's Rules of Order*) the By-Laws must be followed at all times just as our country must always follow the Constitution. One cannot exist without the other. You have chaos and anarchy otherwise.

Speaking of chaos, whether you know it or not, unless your club took the time to write a complete set of meeting rules and invoke them in the By-Laws, your meetings are governed by *Robert's Rules of Order*. How many of you have made or seconded a motion? Are motions and seconds described in your By-Laws? Probably not. Based on generations of common practice our society, *Robert's* puts down in writing the rules people have adopted over centuries to ensure an open, fair, impartial, democratic, courteous and organized meeting where all are heard.

Of course, each club or organization has unique circumstances such that specific rules or By-Law changes are made by the membership that add to, enhance, or sometime even go against *Robert's*. In terms of precedence, your **Organizational By-Laws come first**, then rules properly passed and recorded by the membership or body authorized by the By-Laws or membership (e.g. Board of Governors), and finally *Robert's*.

Please note that the Chair, advised by the Parliamentarian, has the power to rule on procedural disputes about compliance with By-Laws, rules, minutes, *Robert's*, or other governing documents. However, the membership may overrule the chair provided there are sufficient votes, as defined in your club By-Laws or in *Robert's*.

CBYCA clubs are pure democracies entirely owned, run and directed by the membership as a whole. This refers to the club and its assets. Many clubs use property and reside on land they do not own. However, the owners of the property can have no direct influence over the operation of a CBYCA club. Boards, officers, managers, and employees of the club have no power and authority other than what is specifically delegated to them per the By-Laws or by action of the members in a properly held and recorded meeting. Similar to stockholders of a corporation, the members, in a properly constituted meeting where a quorum exists, may overturn any decision by an officer or the Board.

The CBYCA is a large association covering a wide population not unlike corporations, for this reason, proxies has been written into our Bylaws. Any organization may incorporate statements in their Bylaws to address specific rules of operations. Generally, Roberts Rules prohibit proxies for smaller clubs and societies because the point of a club or society is to get people together, not run a business. Some clubs have holding corporations that own club property but that is normally OK as long as the corporation is accountable to the membership.

The By-Laws define the club and are its identity – for a typical club, they can only be changed by rigorous process with the changes passed only by 2/3 majorities. If it is easy to change the By-Laws at your club, you may want to consider changes to the process.

Any club that ignores its By-Laws or whose Board or officers act with impunity against the will of the majority is not operating in a manner consistent with CBYCA By-Laws.

PARTNER PROGRAM

One of the primary purposes of the CBYCA is to protect the interests of boaters through legislation and interaction with national, state, and local boating and waterway organizations, public and private. To this end, we have forged a "Legislative Confederation" that has broadened the powers base, strengthened the boaters voice and offered the opportunity for more people to participate. We commend our partners for their dedication and commitment to work together on mutually beneficial issues.

NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION - NBF
POTOMAC RIVER YACHT CLUBS ASSOCIATION-PRYCA
DELEAWARE RIVER YACHTSMEN'S LEAGUE-DRYL
CHESAPEAKE COMMODORES CLUB-CCC
BOATER VOTER COALITION - BVC
PENNSYLVANIA BOATING ASSOCIATION of SOUTHEASTERN PA-PBASE
MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION of SHRINE YACHT CLUBS-MAASYC
YACHT CLUBS of MARYLAND - YCM

USE OUR ADVERTISERS! Mention their ad in the CBYCA Chartroom Chatter Roster Issue!

CBYCA COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Email Guidelines:

A. The agenda would be sent out in advance by the Commodore with a specified time for reports and comments; a quorum would be established via Board members' response to agenda items and comments. For example, an agenda sent on Mon. Jan 15 and response from Board members to receipt of the agenda and comments due by Wed., Jan 17.

B. A mechanism, such as a listserv, will be utilized to which all discussion comments can be made and viewed by all participants; such listservs are available from Yahoo and/or other internet organizations at little or no cost. Leadership will determine the specific plan.

C. Motions from board members would be sent to the Commodore for his/her finalization before sending all proposed motions to Board members for vote. For example, motion sent on Thurs., Jan 18 for voting and Secretary will receive all votes and disseminate the results and a summary of meeting to Board members on Sat., Jan 20. The process would take place in lieu of the Martin Luther King Holiday weekend CBYCA meeting. Commodore/Secretary would be responsible for submitting final minutes to CBYCA website.

Teleconference Guidelines

A. The agenda would be sent to Board members via email by Commodore two days prior to teleconference call, specifying the time of the meeting and the dial-in 800 number. Board members may suggest additions or revisions to the agenda via email to the Commodore.

B. The quorum would be established by members dialing into the 800# and announcing their presence; the Secretary will report on the attendance number for quorum. Changes to the mailed agenda would be announced by the Commodore to the members on the wire prior to the beginning of the teleconference discussions.

C. The Commodore or his/her designee will lead discussion on specific actions, and describe what needs to be done and the rationale prior to voting; Board members will vote by responding when Secretary calls the name of the Board member.

D. The Commodore will summarize meeting at its close; Secretary will send minutes to Board members within one week of teleconference. Commodore/Secretary will submit minutes to CBYCA website

E. Board meetings are open to all members of CBYCA—dates and times of electronic Board meetings will be posted on the website. Any Delegate wishing to participate should notify the Commodore so that the proper procedures may be taken for his or her participation

The New & Improved CBYCA Website WWW.CBYCA.ORG

Look what your club can do at the CBYCA website!

Publish your event on our website immediately and if entered by the 25th of any month it will appear automatically in the next Chartroom Chatter Goldenrod which is sent to 1000 folks.

Does your event have a Poster or Flyer? We will publish a printable version for everyone to see and print out for their bulletin board on our special "Flyers" page. The flyer page is a great resource to save mailing expense and make it available to other members. Just send a copy to the webmaster, webmaster@cbyca.org

Correct and review any of your 2009 club Roster information simply by going to the "Roster Information on Line" and follow the instructions. Your accuracy is important as we print what you enter.

In fact, you can go to the website anytime you like, 3:00 am in the morning, 2:00 pm in the afternoon to find meeting times, party times, commodore balls, opening days, web links to clubs, legislative alerts, protocol matters, and the best list of links to state government, charts, tide tables, and other boating related sites. Take your time to learn about the CBYCA and all it offers