

## **Protocol Matters**

By Joe Hellner

### Flags and Burgee Reminders

As we launch into the boating season, don't forget to fly office flags from your home club on the starboard side and burgees and flags from other clubs on the port side. If your boat has a mast with a yardarm, your club burgee is flown at the top of the mast just as it is flown from your yacht club mast. Most powerboats don't have a mast with a yardarm, so the correct place for your yacht club burgee is at the bow. If you fly other flags at the bow, it is a good idea to place your club burgee as far forward as possible in the place of honor. Having your club burgee stand out also helps people quickly identify the home club of the boat, which they will associate with the office flags flown on the starboard side. Sailboats should fly the club burgee at the top of the mast on a stick that is hoisted up with the burgee attached. If a sailboat cannot fly the club burgee this way, it should be flown at the top of the starboard hoist with the club office flags directly below in order of rank.

To guide you in placing flags in the proper order, in addition to rank, there is a simple general rule found in many publications such as CHAPMANS, which says to go by most to least represented. For example, Past Commodore flags always go below office flags because Past Commodore is a personal flag not an office that serves or represents a number of people. Flags or burgees representing organizations of clubs are flown highest with the largest region covered placed at the top (i.e. international, national, regional, statewide, local). Yachting organizations with individual members such as Blue Gavel come next, following the same order of international to local. After the organizations come clubs and finally individual flags. Office flags on the port side are flown immediately below the organization or club flag to which they belong, except where the office flag has a clear connection with the club or organization. YCM, CCC, and CBYCA are examples where the office flag is sufficient.

If possible, try to place yacht club related flags on different hoists from other boating organizations such as USPS and USCGA. Also, don't normally mix state or country flags on the same hoists with yacht club and boating organization flags. If they are on the same hoist, the state flag goes on top and everything below the state flag should be from that state. The same for country flags.

Till next time, see you around the Bay!