



Purpose and Bylaws

PURPOSE:

**THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THE MERRY MARINERS
BOATING CLUB IS:
FUN - FRIENDSHIP - OUTREACH - KNOWLEDGE.**

FUN:

**SHARING THE GOOD TIMES INVOLVED WITH BOATING,
WATER ACTIVITIES, AND SOCIALIZING.**

FRIENDSHIP:

**PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND MAKE
NEW FRIENDS WITH PEOPLE OF LIKE INTERESTS.**

OUTREACH:

**A CLUB OF LIMITED MEMBERSHIP THAT IS OPEN TO
BOAT OWNERS AND NON-OWNERS ALIKE. ALL HAVING
A COMMON INTEREST IN, AND SHARING AN EQUAL
VOICE IN PROVIDING A SUPPORT SYSTEM TO THE NEW
BOATERS IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATERS IN ORDER
TO HELP THEM FEEL COMFORTABLE.**

KNOWLEDGE:

**ALL MEMBERS SHARE A COMMON INTEREST IN SAFETY
ON THE WATER, AND IN LEARNING, GROWING, AND
PRACTICING GOOD SEAMANSHIP.**

Bylaws for the Merry Mariners Boat Club

The Merry Mariner's Boating Club will be governed by the following elected positions: Commodore, Vice Commodore, Rear Commodore, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Commodore, with the governing board's approval, will appoint chairpersons for the following committees: Membership, Telephone, Hospitality, Historian, Cardboard Boat, Fundraising, Compassionate Service, Land Activities, Boat Safety Education, and Webmaster. Committee Chairpersons are considered as voting members of the Executive Board. The Past Commodore may participate in Executive Board meetings as an ex-officio, non-voting member. All duties and responsibilities of the governing board and committees shall be as appended to these guidelines. *(Added 6/12)*

It is mandated that **SAFETY FIRST** is the Club's **TOP PRIORITY**.

Changes to the Guidelines governing the MMBC will be accomplished through majority approved recommendations from the Governing/Executive Board to MMBC Membership for open or secret voting. Voting members of the Governing/Executive Board consist of the elected officers and chairpersons of the standing committees. Subjects for membership voting require a quorum of 25% membership attendance and a majority approval by said quorum to pass.

A. MEMBERSHIP AND DUES REQUIREMENTS

1. All individuals wishing to become members of Merry Mariners including boat owners, spouses, singles, and non-owners who crew, must take a safe boating course through either the Coast Guard or the Power Squadron.
2. A new member has six (6) months from the time of joining the club to complete a Boat Safety Course to continue boating and renew membership. Boat owners must present a Safe Boating Certificate prior to acting as Skipper on any MMBC boating activity. A copy of the certificate of completion must be presented to the Board, and filed in the Club's archives by the Club Secretary. *(Updated 12/10/13)*
3. In recognition of the Club's fundamental "sharing" principle, all boat owners shall agree to take crew members aboard for club boating activities as a condition of membership.
4. Dues for each **new member** are \$30.00 for the **first year**. The dues include magnetic badges and all special events enjoyed by existing members (dinners, picnics, etc). Members joining after Sept of each year, may choose to apply the cost to the following year membership and pay the guest price for the December Party; or go to the party at the member price and renew for the following year. *(Added 8/07)*
5. After the first year in the MMBC, dues are \$22.00 per person and are **due** and payable at the **December** Planning Meeting. Dues deadline will be the 15th of the following January. Members not paying on or before the January deadline will be dropped from the Club's membership and will have to re-apply for membership to be a member of MMBC. *(Updated 4/13)*
6. Part-time and full-time residents pay yearly dues equally.

B. MEETING LOCATION

Location of the Planning Meetings of the Merry Mariners is the **Power Squadron Bldg.** at **917 SE 47th Terrace**, unless preempted by other activities. *(Address corrected 1/25/14)*

C. MEETING SCHEDULE

1. **Planning Meetings** will normally be held the first (1st) Tuesday of every other month: **FEBRUARY - APRIL - JUNE - AUGUST - OCTOBER - DECEMBER**. Meetings may be temporarily changed due to unusual circumstances.
 - a. The Hospitality Chairperson shall designate a panel of Hosts and Hostesses to act as a "Hospitality Committee" to assist in planning and setting up the Planning Meetings.
 - b. ALL members present at the Planning Meetings are to share in the cleaning and closing up duties.
 - c. Food, preferably Pot Luck plus BYOB, to be provided by members as requested by the Telephone Committee.
 - d. The Club will provide ice, cups, paper plates, napkins, plastic tableware, coffee and tea.
 - e. Prospective members may attend one Planning Meeting by paying a cost of \$5.00. If this prospective member joins MMBC at this Planning Meeting, the \$5.00 will be applied to their annual dues.
 - f. Guests attending a Planning Meeting will be charged \$5.00. Guests attending the Christmas Dinner Meeting will pay the full price of dinner.
2. Executive Board meetings will be held at the discretion of the Commodore during the month prior to each Planning/Business Meeting.

D. BOATING ACTIVITIES

1. Boating activities will be held **Twice** per month. The first trip is always the **first Wednesday** of each month. The second trip is held the **third week** of each month, with the scheduled day rotating from Monday thru Friday. Refer to the calendar.
 - a. Plans for the Club boating activities will be recommended by appointed Destination Chairperson(s). The Destination Chairperson(s) will present recommendations to the Governing Board for final approval, publication, and distribution to the general membership.
 - b. Boat owners (skippers) will be assigned crewmembers by a random process to ensure the "mix and meet" purpose of the Club is upheld.
 - c. Crew Members may also take a guest(s) as long as their Skipper agrees and the guest(s) may be safely accommodated on board. Member must notify Cruise Destination Chairperson(s) when guests are joining cruise. All rules apply equally to all guests as apply to Merry Mariners.
 - d. On occasion a Skipper may want/need to use a "non-member" boat. Use of a non-member boat may be permitted with the Commodore's prior approval, not to exceed two (2) occurrences per any 12-month period. Such boats must meet the established Merry Mariners Safety and Insurance Requirements.
2. The Club's trips are designed for Boating Flotillas – meeting at a certain Channel marker for the trip. This "safety in numbers" Flotilla provides assistance in the event any boat is disabled – or other assistance is needed.

It is not a requirement that boats stay within the Flotilla grouping. If a Skipper is not comfortable staying within the Flotilla for any reason, they have the freedom to proceed to the assigned location on their own. If the decision is made to do this, the Skipper must notify the other boats of the Flotilla prior to separating from them.

3. As required by the FCC, all skippers should monitor Marine VHF Channel 16. On all Club cruises the "working" VHF channel will be **CH 71**.
All boats used in any Merry Mariner boating activity must have a current Coast Guard **Vessel Safety Check** sticker. To remain current, a **Vessel Safety Check** sticker is required within 90 days of each New Year, or upon joining the Club.
(Added 2/06)
4. Starting on January 1st, 2006 all skippers must carry a minimum of \$300,000 watercraft liability insurance on their boat. A current copy of the renewal page or definitions page showing the coverage must be on file with the Club Secretary each year for a skipper to use his/her boat on a club outing. Although not required by the club, skippers should also consider uninsured boaters insurance for their protection.
(Added 10/06)
5. Liquor will not be consumed, and open liquor bottles are not be allowed on any boat during any Merry Mariner outing. However, consuming a drink during a dinner or lunch outing is OK as long as it is not excessive. Although not required by the club, a skipper always has the right to refuse to take an inebriated crew member on board his/her boat.
(Added 10/06)

E. CREW RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Sharing of activity expenses will be per the Club's cost schedule published elsewhere.
(Ask your Skipper)
2. Follow your Skipper's boat rules - You are a guest and a friend.
3. Be a helpful crewmember - handle lines, fenders, anchor rode, etc.

F. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (updated 4/5/13)

1. The Executive Board appoints a Nominating Committee that will be announced to the membership at the August Planning Meeting. The Nominating Committee selects a slate of officers (one candidate per office) for the five elected positions (Commodore, Vice Commodore, Rear Commodore, Treasurer, and Secretary) and at least **30 days** before the October planning meeting circulates the slate along with a notice to the membership that other member candidates must be submitted to the nominating committee no later than **15 days** prior to the October planning meeting. The Nominating Committee will email a copy of the ballot to all members no later than **13 days** prior to the October election meeting.
2. Nominations from the floor are permitted at the October Planning Meeting, but the person nominated must have previously agreed to accept the office if elected. They will be considered a write-in candidate.
3. Voting requires a quorum of at least 25% membership in attendance. A candidate must receive a plurality of votes to win.
4. Absentee ballots will be accepted. The Procedures for casting an absentee ballot are as follows: The Nominating Committee will email a copy of the ballot to all members no later than **13 days** prior to the October election meeting. Those wishing to cast an absentee ballot will download and print their ballot. The marked ballot must be placed into a plain envelope. (Plain means no identification) That envelope is then placed into another envelope for mailing to the chair of the nominating committee. Ballots must be

- received no later than **1 day** prior to the voting meeting in order to be included in the vote. It is the responsibility of the member to ensure their ballot is received prior to the deadline. The ballot mailing envelope will not be opened until the night of the election to allow for the sudden appearance of the member. Families with two members must cast their ballots in separately mailed envelopes.
5. The candidates for the elected offices must be full-time residents. (this means approximately 12 months)
 6. The candidate (s) for Commodore must have been club member for a least a year by August 1 of the election year.
 7. The office of Commodore has a term limit of two consecutive years.
 8. The ballot will be presented by the chair of the Nominating Committee at the October Planning Meeting for the election to take place.
 9. Voting shall be by secret ballot for those offices where candidates are running opposed. Voting for unopposed candidates shall be open voting conducted by show of hands.
 10. Counting of the ballots: The Commodore will select 4 volunteer members from the floor. One person will open the ballot and read the votes. One person will tally the votes. Two people will watch for mistakes. The vote count may not be made public without permission of all candidates for that office.
 11. Any election rules not covered by these bylaws will be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.

MMBC OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

(Duties and Responsibilities)

Commodore:

Presides over meetings, coordinates activities and appoints committee chairpersons with consent of Board as needed. Acts as Club spokesperson for all inter-club activities. Becomes familiar with the duties and responsibilities of all officers and chairpersons and ensures the activities of the offices and chairs are consistent with the club's needs

Vice Commodore:

If the Commodore is unavailable for whatever reason, the Vice Commodore will assume all duties as Commodore. The Vice Commodore will assist with activities assigned by the Commodore.

Rear Commodore:

The Rear Commodore will be responsible for all boating activities and destinations. (See Section D of the By-Laws for further duties and responsibilities.) In addition, the Rear Commodore will assume duties assigned by the Commodore. In the absence of both the Commodore and the Vice Commodore, the Rear Commodore shall officiate in their stead.

Treasurer:

Collects all dues and fees. Disburses all funds as approved by the Commodore and/or Board. Keeps an account of all money received and disbursed. Prepares a bi-monthly report for presentation at the Planning Meetings. Notifies Membership Chair of dues paid.

Secretary:

Takes and reports minutes of all Club meetings. Records Safe Boating Certificates and maintains certificate checklist. Maintain a list of skippers including copies of their liability insurance and Vessel Safety Check certificate. Send a current list to the Destination Chair(s) so they know if a skipper is current on all Merry Mariner requirements. ***Emails Board Meeting minutes within one week of the Board Meeting.***

Safety Education Chairperson:

Develop a Safety Training program for each Planning Meeting addressing safety issues of interest to club members. This session need not be longer than 15 minutes. Provide a written synopsis of this session to the Historian to be included in the bi-monthly newsletter and to the webmaster to be posted on the Merry Mariner website.

Historian:

Maintains files consisting of photographs taken at any activities and newspaper clippings, letters or cards of historical interest to the Club

Telephone Chairperson:

Appoints a committee to call designated members about food contributions needed for Planning/Business Meetings, or any changes in the functions of the Club as directed by the Commodore.

Membership Chairperson:

- a. Maintains an updated membership list and the waiting list.
- b. Introduces new members and ensures they receive a copy of the Guidelines, the MMBC membership roster, and a welcome letter for new members.
- c. Calls prospective members and answers any questions about the Club.

Hospitality Chairperson:

Coordinates all kitchen activities for the Planning Meetings. Maintains and purchases supplies, serve meals, removes food, and cleans the kitchen.

Activities Chairperson:

Helps coordinate and schedule non-boating activities such as guest speakers and community oriented events.

Compassionate Service Chairperson:

Maintains contact with members who are ill or hospitalized; coordinates support services for families experiencing a death. *Sends cards to members for illnesses, loss of family member, etc.*

Fundraising Chairperson:

Conducts 50/50 raffle and other fund raising activities.

Cardboard Boat Race Chairperson:

- a. Seek and obtain sponsorship for our entry in the regatta.
- b. Maintain contact with the Rotary Club related to requirements, changes and dates of the annual event
- c. Conduct a meeting of interested club members to decide (in a vote) on the cardboard boat to be constructed and the theme to be followed. The selected boat must involve multiple members of the club as builders, role players, and other supporters of our efforts.
- d. Conduct a survey of our members to determine what position or role each member is to fulfill in the regatta.
- e. Contact local media to obtain publicity for our entry in the regatta.
- f. Oversee and assist with the design and construction of the boat and oversee the set-up and dismantling of the booth.
- g. Arrange for the displaying and transportation of the boat to selected pre and post regatta locations (i.e. local libraries).
- h. Organize a "celebration" party for the club/regatta participants following the regatta.
- i. Determine a "final" display location or disposal for the boat.

(Added 10/05/10)

Webmaster:

Responsible for design and maintenance of Merry Mariners website.

Past Commodore:

May attend, advise, and participate in Executive Board meetings as an ex-officio, non-voting member.