

## A Little Nautical Humour (and other tidbits)

### A Sailor of Thirst

A thirsty sailor runs from his boat to the nearest bar and shouts to the bartender, "Give me twenty shots of your best scotch, quick!"

The bartender pours out the shots, and the sailor drinks them as fast as he can. The bartender is very impressed and exclaims, "Wow. I never saw anybody drink that fast. "

The sailor replies, "Well, you'd drink that fast too, if you had what I have." The bartender says, "Oh my God!, What is it? What do you have?" "Fifty cents!" is the reply.

(Continue with our "Next" page)

### A Captain's Job

It's not my job to run this boat, the horn I cannot blow. It's not my job to say how far this boat's allowed to go. It's not my job to throttle up, or even clang the bell. But let this damn boat hit the dock, and see who catches hell.

### Fowl Magic

A magician was working on a cruise ship in the Caribbean. The audience would be different each week, so the magician allowed himself to do the same tricks over and over again. There was only one problem: The captain's parrot saw the shows each week and began to understand how the magician did every trick. Once he understood he started shouting in the middle of the show:

"Look, it's not the same hat." "Look, he is hiding the flowers under the table." "Hey, why are all the cards the Ace of Spades?"

The magician was furious but couldn't do anything; it was, after all, the captain's parrot.

One day the ship had an accident and sank. The magician found himself adrift on a piece of wood in the middle of the ocean with the parrot, of course. They stared at each other with hate, but did not utter a word. This went on for a day, then another, and another.

After a week the parrot said: "OK, I give up. What'd you do with the ship?"

### Paint it True

John decided to scrape and paint the hull of his 34 foot cruiser. Not being sure how much paint to buy and knowing that Paul, a close friend who had the same size boat had recently painted his, he gave him a call. "Paul," he said, "How many gallons of paint did you buy for your boat?" "Six," said Paul.

John went out and bought six gallons of paint but when the job was done he had two gallons left over! Calling Paul again, "Paul," he said, "I bought six gallons of paint for my boat, but I've got two gallons left over." "Funny," said Paul, "So did I."

(By the way, the actual formula for figuring out how much bottom paint for one coat is the boat's LOA x Beam x .85 divided by the area (same unit of measure) the paint covers, as quoted on the label.)

## All Balls on Deck

In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannon fired round iron cannon balls and it was necessary to keep a good supply of ammo near the muzzle. But how to prevent them from rolling about the deck?

The best storage method devised was a square based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four, resting on nine which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon.

There was only one problem -- how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding out and rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate with 16 round indentations. But if this plate was made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it.

The solution to the rusting problem was to make the plate out of brass. However, few landlubbers realize that due to the differing temperature co-efficients of the metals, brass contracts much faster and at a greater rate than iron when chilled.

Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannon balls would roll off their plates and scatter about deck.

Now, since this pyramid holding plate was called a "monkey", it was sometimes quite literally, "Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey!" (And all this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you?)

Tips for Ships &bull; When you see a green navigation light on another boat at night, it indicates that you are the Stand&ndash;on vessel and he is the Give-way vessel. In other words, "GREEN means (or at least should mean) GO." However, the rule of common sense insists that we must do everything possible to avoid a collision. So, if the Give-way vessel ignores the rules, the burden of avoiding a collision falls on you.

&bull; When you see a red navigation light on another boat, it means that you are the Give-way boat and you must take immediate and substantial action to avoid a collision. In other words, "RED means STOP!"

&bull; For safety's sake, dock lines should never be undersized. Minimum line sizes are: Boats under 20 ft. = \",  
Boats 20 to 30 ft. = ½",  
Boats 30 to 40 ft. = ¾", and  
Boats 40 to 50 ft. = ¾".

&bull; If a wave doubles in height, the force of that wave is not merely doubled, its force is quadrupled or four times larger.

&bull; When the wind switches to the North-West in the Northern Hemisphere, it generally indicates the arrival of a high pressure system and fair weather.

&bull; Cold fronts generally move about 2½ times faster than do warm fronts. An approaching, strong, cold front will generally produce thunderstorms, strong winds and a squall line in front of it. Very, very rarely can you outrun a squall line. So don't try to.

&bull; High clouds (Cirrus) most often indicate an approaching change in the weather; normally within 6 to 8 hours.

&bull; Low clouds usually indicate that the weather system is near.

&bull; On longer legs of your voyages, when vessel traffic is light, use your autopilot if you have one. It will steer your boat much more accurately that you can, and it will reduce the fatigue of the helmsman. Caution: NEVER leave the bridge unattended when you are on autopilot. There must always be someone at the helm whenever a boat is moving!

&bull; To be successful in boating, you just have to know how to tie three (3) basic knots. The knots are: 1. the Bowline (pronounced "bowlin"),  
2. the Cleat Hitch and  
3. A Round Turn with Two (2) Half Hitches. (Learn to tie these knots so well that you can do it in your sleep.)

&bull; Get some soft pine, tapered plugs at your nearest boat store and attach one to each underwater, through hull fitting on your boat. Then, if a fitting should fail for any reason, you can just hammer the pine plug into the opening of the failed fitting to hopefully stop - or, at the very least, greatly slow down - the incoming water.

• The average 2lb fire extinguisher only lasts for about 12 seconds. So make sure you aim at the base of the fire and get as close to it as you safely can. Caution: If you do not get the fire out in the first two (2) minutes, you'll probably have to abandon ship, call in a "Mayday" and later call your insurance company.

• Make sure the Chart Datum on your GPS is the same as the Datum on your paper chart. Most charts today use "World Geodetic System 1984" (WGS-84), but some of the older charts use "North American Datum 1927" (NAD-27). If your GPS is using different Datum than the Datum on your chart, there are going to be some glaring discrepancies. If you go to "Set Up" on your GPS, you can choose the Datum you want to use.

### What Knot to Know

Well, first we should know that for distance sailors used (and still use) the so called 'nautical mile'. If you slice Earth into two equal halves right through its center along equator for example, then divide the perimeter (the circumference) into 360 degrees, then each degree into 60 arc minutes, the length you get is approximately 1 nautical mile.

Therefore, one nautical mile is the arc distance of "about" 1 minute of a degree (or 1/60th of a degree) of Earth. We say approximate because if you choose to slice Earth along the prime meridian, the line that goes through the North and South poles you would get a slightly different result than through the Equator, due to the fact that Earth is not a perfect sphere - it is slightly flattened at the poles. The difference between the polar and equatorial diameter being about 23.4 nautical miles out of Earth's 6880 nautical mile circumference. Exact value for the nautical mile is taken to be the average of the two (polar and equatorial) and is: 1 nautical mile = 1.15 miles = 1852 meters = 6067 feet

Naturally, sailors wanted to have their ship's speed in units of nautical miles per hour and to measure this, a wooden plank with a rope attached that had knots every 50 feet was thrown overboard and timed with a 30 second sand glass. If 10 knots went overboard in half a minute, then the ship was moving forward at an apparent speed of 10 knots or 10 nautical miles per hour, (you had to account for windage, current and of course if your rope dragged the board).

Records from 1917 (USS Bowditch) indicate that the official U.S. Navy sand glass measured 28 seconds, and that knots were spaced out exactly 48 feet (or 8 fathoms - a popular length unit of that time). With this setup, ship's speed could be measured with an error of about 1.5%. There you go, from knots to GPS, human ingenuity surprises and inspires once again!