

REVISED

# SAFETY

## for Cruising Couples

Learn what to do when the unexpected happens.  
Increase safety and enjoyment through partnership.



PUBLISHED BY THE CRUISING CLUB OF AMERICA

## Comments on Safety and Partnership

### SAFETY AT SEA ISN'T ABOUT ELIMINATING

risk, but about managing it. Like any outdoor endeavor, being out on the water carries inherent risk and if we weren't willing to accept that — in return for its great rewards — we would stay home. One of the most important considerations for any boat crew is the level of risk that each member of the team is willing to accept. It's crucial to be honest with each other and with oneself about both partners' wishes and expectations. If one partner doesn't want to be out there, that's not a recipe for a safe or happy boat. If one partner wants to work up to more extensive sailing but isn't comfortable with his/her skill level, it's safest to spend the time to build expertise in smaller steps.

We use the word "expertise" here instead of "experience" because, to quote *The Mountaineering Handbook* by Craig Connally, "the problem with experience is that it becomes self-validating. In the absence of catastrophic evidence to the contrary, experience takes on the appearance of wisdom, even when it only means making the same mistake over and over." In view of this, an essential component of risk management at sea is not to become complacent, not to believe you know everything and have nothing to learn, but instead to be always thinking, evaluating and observing.

— **Ellen and Seth Leonard (Big Island, Hawai'i)**



### IT IS CRITICAL TO KNOW EACH OTHER'S

strengths and weaknesses and each of our abilities so that we can adapt quickly to change. It is equally essential to think both critically and collectively to support any situation onboard, especially the rapidly deteriorating or emergency ones. This is especially true when sailing with young children as inevitably their needs are always heightened at times when the boat requires our undivided attention. We found that being open to continued teaching and learning from each other was important. Balancing the many facets of marriage, parenting and long distance sailing demand the deepest aspects of working together, being able to flex and stretch and ultimately rely on each other.

— **Tori Willauer and Tony Fitch (Rockport, Maine)**



### THE AVERAGE CRUISING BOAT IS

getting bigger but none of us is getting any younger. To cruise safely and successfully we need systems and plans that work for everyone aboard—and we need to communicate about those systems and plans, particularly when we bungle them. The most common and well-received words aboard *Dogbark* are "thank you" and "sorry."

Today, our two young daughters are key members of our crew. Their responsibilities have increased with their skills—and vice versa. Kids are more capable than we think.

This book helps move the conversation forward among cruising couples so they can sail safely and comfortably together wherever they dream up.

— **Janna, Graeme, Talia, and Savai Cawrse Esarey (Seattle, Washington)**

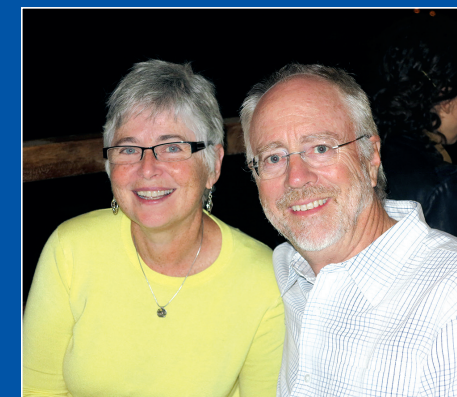


## Comments on Safety and Partnership

### FOR MANY YEARS, WE RELIED HEAVILY

on Rick's seamanship skills as we cruised the coast of Nova Scotia with our two children. Before we embarked on a transatlantic passage, Bonnie took several Canadian Power Squadron courses and became more involved in navigation and helming. The wisdom of this became evident when Rick was temporarily incapacitated by a medical problem while we were cruising in Turkey. Fortunately, Bonnie was able to bring Rick, the boat and herself into port safely. Most importantly, she was able to focus on Rick's well-being without doubting her own seamanship skills. How fortunate that we did not encounter such a situation off the rocky and foggy Nova Scotian coast in the days when our children were small! Sailing the boat as true partners is a joy, and also helps to ensure our mutual safety. If you love your mate, make sure that each of you is competent to take charge in an emergency.

— **Bonnie and Rick Salsman (Halifax, Nova Scotia)**



### WE GO ON THE WATER FOR FUN,

but having all the weight on one person, should trouble arise, can be unnerving to the whole crew. Everyone on board can be more comfortable and confident if more than one person knows the essentials of boat handling, navigation, radio use and safety equipment. Skippers and crews need to be willing to share the rewards of improving skills. It may be just as hard for the more experienced boater to step away from the helm to let a spouse or crew member practice a crew-overboard drill, as it is for a tentative spouse or crew member to risk making mistakes before mastering the skill.

Just remember the long-term benefits of being able to rely on each other far outweigh the short-term inconvenience of adjusting the partnership responsibilities. We should make practice and skill building in good conditions part of the fun of being on the water.

— **Sheila McCurdy and David Brown (Middletown, Rhode Island)**



### CRUISING AS A COUPLE REQUIRES

great communication, flexibility and trust. However, without a basic skill set of boat handling and preparedness by both partners, all the communication in the world will not help in an emergency.

The CCA's commitment to continuing education and hands-on training for cruising couples is one of the primary reasons we joined. Developing action plans and practicing drills, with even our youngest crew members, has become an integral part of our time on the water, one that boosts our confidence, sharpens our skills and can even be fun!

As in our life ashore, in most instances we have established tasks/jobs on board. Trusting the other can handle an emergency enriches our sense of confidence and unity. As we continue to refine our skills, we particularly enjoy collaborating (sometimes commiserating) with other CCA members.

— **Alec and Erin Brainerd (Rockport, Maine)**



**SAFETY FOR CRUISING COUPLES** is part of a popular and widely recognized program to help raise the competence and confidence of crew members on power and sail boats cruising in coastal waters. When dealing with an emergency, you must be prepared to make the right decisions. The Cruising Club of America has developed this workbook and related seminar to help you:

- Learn what to do if you are suddenly in command during an emergency
- Learn how to call for help using VHF radio
- Learn how to prepare your boat – and yourself – before you leave the dock
- Learn and practice man overboard skills on your own boat, with your own equipment
- Learn to develop teamwork and partnership with your skipper
- Enhance your skills using checklists and additional resources

Safety for Cruising Couples is a “must” for new cruisers and young families with children to improve skills and provide a safer and more enjoyable cruising experience. It is also a valuable refresher course for experienced cruisers to update and enhance their skills.



## THE CRUISING CLUB OF AMERICA

At its core, the Cruising Club of America is a collection of passionate, seriously accomplished, ocean sailors making adventurous use of the seas. All members have extensive offshore boat handling, seamanship, and command experience honed over many years.

The CCA has long been considered a reliable source of information on ocean sailing, and its members are among the most accomplished ocean sailors of our day, leaders in developing and codifying best practices of the sport, especially in the domain of Safety at Sea.

The CCA is all about the spirit of helping others who share our passion for blue water sailing. Today's CCA

member is engaged in making a positive difference in the world. They voluntarily run courses on safety and seamanship, write about safety for both racers and cruisers, contribute to the technical foundations of yacht design and systems, and take an active role in improving the environmental health of our oceans, collaborating with conservation organizations around the planet.

**Learn more about CCA at [www.cruisingclub.org/about](http://www.cruisingclub.org/about)**

