

Fun in Boating and on the Water

Boating Tips

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Recent articles indicate fewer people are becoming boaters. Young adults, especially those with teenagers and younger, just haven't caught the boating fever of their parents or grandparents. We current boaters need to make an effort to introduce this group to boating before it disappears with sandlot baseball, touch football, and pick-up basketball.

Fishing is an easy and inexpensive introduction to what I'll term fun on the water. Recreational groups plus most states sponsor "Take a kid fishing" or free fishing days statewide or on various lakes, rivers or beaches. I recall the first time our granddaughter caught her first fish, a sunfish. Share that thrill with another child.

Take a youngster out in a johnboat, teaching them to start the motor, steer with the tiller outboard as well as stop the boat. To a nine-year-old, ten mph on the water is breakneck speed.

Skiing, tubing or similar activities introduce all ages to water sports. Learning to ski takes practice yet is exhilarating once the newbie gets up and stays up. They eventually graduate to one ski. Two precautionary notes, turn off the engine when boarding people from the water as a turning prop leaves a deep gash. For very young tubers I suggest a helmet to protect their ears and head. Hitting the water at high speed can cause a broken eardrum or concussion. And, as the captain of the boat, be certain to have a spotter to keep a close eye on the swimmer in the water, particularly one that has stopped and not nearly as visible to other boaters while they are floating in the water.

Swimming off the swim platform or forward deck, doing flips, flops and cannon balls are always fun. Know what is just below the water though. With swimmers in the water, turn off the engine and generator to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. While swimming on a hot day is refreshing fun, ever wonder what's below? Even with a discount store fins, full face mask and snorkel anyone can explore several feet down.

Our Sounds offer decent diving and snorkeling under the right conditions. You'd be surprised what a waterproof, high-intensity flashlight will display. Maybe a sunken pirate ship or a house or car washed out during a hurricane. While not as colorful as fish in the Caribbean, watch our fish, crabs and another sea-creatures

move across the bottom. Always have a towable diver down flag attached to the snorkeler. Snorkel outside of boating channels. North Carolina's coastal shores offer decent diving and snorkeling. Warm, clear water along our beaches makes for a fun introduction to snorkeling fun on the water. SCUBA diving off the swim platform is another on the water, fun activity.

With many of these in water activities, have a spotter should anyone get into trouble. Have a throw ring or cushion at hand. Everyone should wear a PFD. Wearing a properly sized PFD now, the newbie becomes comfortable in them hence are more likely to wear a PFD whenever on the water.

With a little effort, we boaters can turn the tide of non-boaters by taking them out on the water. . . safely. Plus everyone will have fun.

This article is given courtesy of the Pamlico Sail & Power Squadron. The Squadron schedules boating education courses and seminars throughout the year. The Squadron is also excited to offer our "Jump Start" Program for boaters who would find it helpful to have an experienced boater spend time tutoring them on the water, in their own boat. This two-hour session starts with a Vessel Safety Check and then practice whatever skills are needed...for example docking, trailering, entering a marina or getting the boat ready to leave the dock and going through oil checks, running the blower, etc. This is a unique opportunity that we are pleased to offer for no cost. To learn more email our Education Officer at psps@gmail.com or contact Linda at 252-964-3009.