



THE LIGHT LAGUNA MADRE YACHT CLUB

March 2008



MAN OVERBOARD!

Brian Mikiten

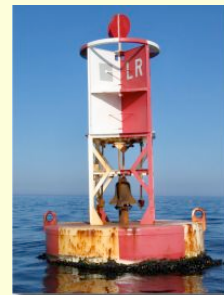
Jim sent me an interesting email the other day. He posed the following concept: During the next race, why not have a man overboard drill required by all competitors? The procedure is simple - each boat would be given a weighted milk jug and be asked to drop it between the start and the first buoy. After dropping, you would sail for 30 seconds then retrieve your "man" and continue the race. I love the idea! As a result, we thought that a review of man overboard procedures and some of the associated tools would make sense.

If you do the basic research on man overboard techniques, you'll find that they are handled differently by power and sail craft and that there are four or more basic concepts touted as recovery techniques. Instead of going through all of them, I thought that the most reasonable approach was the one used by the ASA schools and I'll add a few comments along the way. We will also look at the newer tools on the market for automating the location process - the one that often causes the most concern on the part of the sailor especially when the boat is under manned in ocean conditions.

Tip of the Month

The Clean Boat is a Fun Boat

- 1) Spring is a great time to clean the bilge. Is it dry?
- 2) Go through your cabinets and check for old food, drinks and other supplies.
- 3) Do you really need all those sails on the boat? Pull what you don't use.
- 4) Replenish your safety flares - are they current?
- 5) Check your stuffing box - be sure there isn't any water here.
- 6) Pull the cushion covers and run them through the washing machine.
- 7) Lemon oil the interior to help with mold, mildew and general odors.
- 8) Wash down the deck.
- 9) Clean and lube the blocks.
- 10) Wash the head and flush the tank.





Some Observations

One fact that struck me as I read the many articles available was that while practicing the procedures for man overboard are certainly required, they rarely compensate for sea conditions, mistakes and simple fear. People don't expect to fail at a man overboard recovery nor do they expect the waves, beating of sails, equipment failure or other problems that can happen regardless of your level of planning. People fall from boats when they are tired which often means that the rest of the crew - including those left on board are fatigued as well. This is scary stuff.

One of the reports I read reviewed over forty man overboard recovery devices and address the numerous procedures designed to recover anyone from an able bodied swimmer to a person fully incapacitated. I was amazed at how many recovery techniques required multiple passes even when the recovery was handled by very experienced sailors. The bottom line here is that there are too many situations to cover in our simple newsletter and it bears some significant research to be sure that you and your crew are fully prepared for any instance.

The Basic Procedure

It surprised me as I reviewed the different MOB techniques that the number of steps described in each method varied so much. The basic procedure is simple:

- 1) Yell MAN OVERBOARD!
- 2) Toss a life sling, cushions, PFDs and other devices into the water to help the swimmer and to aid in the location as you prepare to perform the rescue.
- 3) Assign one person as spotter. If you are the only one left on the boat, the above tip will help locate the person.
- 4) Slow down, turn the boat around
- 5) Pick up the MOB.

The full procedure is listed to the in the next column adapted from the Dockland Sailing School and the ASA Basic Sailing Guide. As you read more about the common methods for MOB recovery, you'll find differences in the methods used to stop and turn the boat. Most are variations of the methods used to stop the boat and techniques for coming about. Clearly, boat speed and sea conditions will dictate your approach. I've practiced them in small boats before where we sailed on lakes so waves were less of an issue. In the open sea, this isn't always as simple as a lake recovery especially if you are in a larger boat. The key here is to be able to adapt.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment deserves special attention when it comes to MOB issues. If you are in high seas with a limited crew, you'll need to evaluate your on-board rules for PFD use. If I'm sailing with my son, you'll see us both in PFDs. It gives more time for the rescue and ensures that the risk is lowered. From last month's column on personal locator beacons, (shown here) you'll know that I believe in technology as well when it comes to safety at sea. We both wear one just in case. I cannot imagine anything more frightening than one of us falling overboard and getting lost in the waves. It is a matter of mitigating the risk with, in this case, technology. If we sailed in colder environments, I would approach my risk assessment differently to compensate for the potential dangers of hypothermia. In this case, even the clothing worn by the crew and skipper should be evaluated to be sure it can be shed or is "swimmable"



The second issue is the mobility of the MOB. Are they hurt or just waiting to be picked up? Have they been stressed with a day of hard sailing or just up from a mid-afternoon nap? Was the MOB



drinking? Can the MOB swim? These all affect the methods and approach you will use to deal with the rescue.

Actual Events....

I was on a Beneteau 40.5 off Newport last summer when the winds hit 20+ knots during a race and the captain called for a spinnaker to be set as we rounded the last mark. As it went up (a bit early) everyone on the foredeck was surprised when the boat rocked and then lurched forward. These were experienced sailors who had completed the Newport to Bermuda race just a few months earlier and were in top form. One of them was dragged into the water after the set and found himself under water on the leeward side during the rounding. Quick actions and his strength got him back on board but no one was expecting this. No one was wearing life vests and there wasn't a PFD in sight.



Throwing Line in bag

The fact is, everyone else was hanging on as well! They knew he could help himself but if it had been me, they would have found me in the wake tired and very cold. My mobility after a long day of cold temperatures would have required a completely different approach to the rescue. Keep in mind that while this was a pretty exciting incident, the fact is that many MOB situations are simply falls or tripping accidents.

Identification and Location

Another operational issue is the method used to determine the location of the person in the water. Again, technology can assist here with MOB modules from RayMarine or GPS units that have MOB tags (press two buttons and it triggers an MOB waypoint) can be of great assistance as long as you



remember that currents will move the person from the tagged GPS point. On the low-tech but always reliable side of the equation, do not forget the time honored lifesling or Danbuoy as both can be relied on to operate religiously without batteries!

One of the most reasonable approaches I saw to MOB location tracking was the use of cockpit items including cushions to mark locations - especially for the short handed sailing outing. If it floats and can be seen, toss it over as a marker. While I love technology, it can sometimes get in the way in these conditions.

Practice is Critical

I firmly believe that the most important part of this procedure is practicing it. You have to be able to execute the plan without pause or reference to a written card. You just do it automatically. If you do it often enough, you and your crew won't have a problem if the unexpected occurs. I look forward to adding this as a part of our racing and can't wait to see everyone on the water!



March 8th Social

Pirates of the Laguna Madre Party

Come all ye swash buckling pirates, shimmy down the rigging to attend our party. It will be fun to dress up but it's not required!

Grog 6 PM with pain killers of your choice

Feast 7 PM

The Menu

Rum Barrel Chicken

Wild Field Salads

Cannon Ball Potatoes

And Pillaged Desserts

Members please bring an Appetizer, Salad, or Dessert

Please let us know if you plan to attend.

Peggy Godfrey (956) 943-4718



Man Overboard Drill

1. Analysis:

- React quickly & do not panic. Evaluate your situation - how strong is wind & how high are the waves? How cold is water in terms of hypothermia?
- At outset, inquire if crew can swim & evaluate their experience. Stress the importance of practicing man overboard drill and the importance of PFDs (Personal Floatation Device)

2. Inside the boat commands

- Yell "man overboard" and assign a spotter
- Throw flotation devices immediately
- Put tiller to leeward immediately

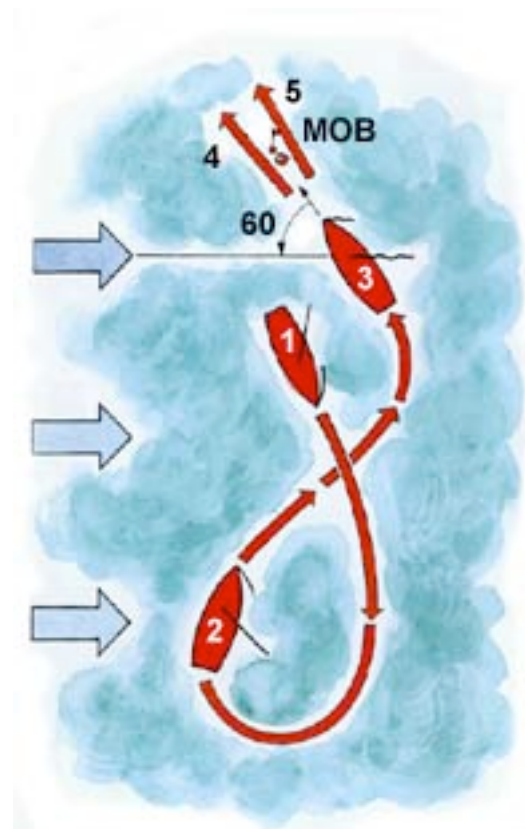
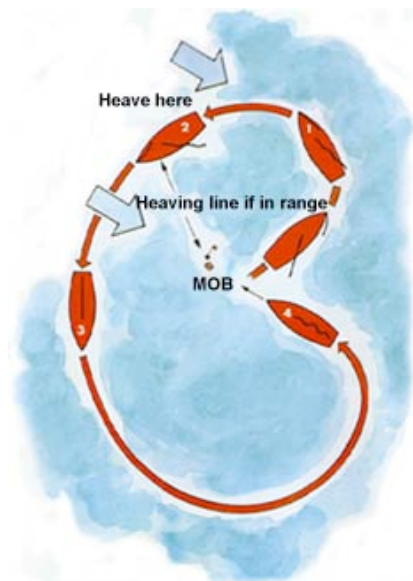
3. Plan recovery

- Head up into the wind, come about and backwind jib
- Approach the target; throw the lifesling, horseshoe, line tied to seat cushion, or line
- Heave to (slow a stop facing into the wind)
- Approach from windward so victim can be brought aboard from leeward quarter (opposite side from wind direction)
- In heavy seas, approach from leeward if danger of boat coming down off wave onto victim
- Avoid jibing in rough sea or wind as may be dangerous in a panic situation
- Instead of circling the victim, come from "inside" and watch your drift
- Elegance of quick stop: after tacking, by pushing tiller "hard alee" second time, have quick heave to "on top of" victim

4. Hauling aboard-may be most difficult part

- Haul aboard off cockpit since bow and stern see- saw more so as to come down on top of victim
- Swim ladder-may be best and easiest way
- Hand over hand along gunwale to stern if swim ladder there and if victim and conditions permit
- Life sling or rope using block and tackle
- Foot or knee loop (bowline)
- Use of jib if victim unconscious

Under power use method 1 and Method 2 for Sail



*~ Fleet Captain's Report ~*

Sadly, Ocean Challenge Race #1 had to be cancelled in February due to near gale wind conditions on race day. Hopefully we'll be able to fit it in later in the year when we stand a better chance of being able to race in decent weather.

We have a lot of activities planned in March. Hopefully all of you will be able to participate in one or more events.

On Saturday March 15th we will hold the first race of the Spring Racing Series. The skippers meeting be held at 1030 at the club house – The start will be at 1330. This will be a Gulf race with a little twist to make life interesting. Each skipper will be carrying one of the infamous “Jugmen” as extra crew at the start of the race. During the run out to the sea buoy “Jugman” will fall overboard. Frantically he'll watch his skipper sail away for 30 seconds. Suddenly the crew will realize that one of their own is missing and the boat will spring into action to recover their comrade. Hopefully the boat will be quick because the race clock will still be running during this seamanship exercise. Returning without your crew is not an option!

Sunday, March 16th will be the start of the Bay Racing Series. We'll hold two around-the-buoy races in West Bay.

The Easter egg hunt will be held on Saturday, March 22. This “hunt” is open to all boats, large or small. Even dinghy's can participate. We'll all meet in our boats off the Pirates Landing piers at 10 AM. After the Easter Bunny makes his run, boats will be released to find their special treasures. After the hunt we'll all gather in the Port Isabel Small Boat Harbor for a raft, lunch (BYO) and to share the booty.

April Events

April 12 th	Gulf Race
April 13 th	Bay Races

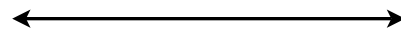
Upcoming Activities in March

March 15th will be the first Gulf Race of the spring series – Look for some interesting seamanship challenges on this race. The fastest boat may not necessarily win!

March 16th will be the first Bay race of the spring series. This will be a couple of around-the-buoy races in West Bay

March 22nd will be our first Easter Egg Hunt on the water open to all boats of all sizes both power and sail. The Easter Bunny will hide “eggs” in West Bay and it will be up to you to find your special eggs. The fun will be followed by a raft in Port Isabel Small Boat Harbor where we will share the spoils of the hunt.

Mark your Calendars and join the fun!

**PHRF Update**

Please contact Jim if you haven't gotten anything back on your PHRF rating. The information was “lost in the mail”. Don't keep this from letting you show up on the starting line - accommodations will be made to adjust times.

*Call for Articles*

Feel free to send in articles, ideas, commentary or musings on your sailing or boating experiences. We are always looking for input from members on any subject that might be of interest to the entire group.



Membership and Directory

Information

There is something remarkable and unique about the Laguna Madre Yacht Club. For one thing, it really is an active organization. Jim and Peggy Godfrey have a busy and exciting year planned ahead. Thanks to Peggy and her helpers, the Club dinners have been absolutely delicious and wonderfully prepared. I love her idea of the “take-home” dinners where the money raised has been used to improve the kitchen. Wow, – good eats and Club changes for the better. Best deal in town. Jim has built on the existing racing program and has added some unique twists and turns. Our Club is going to have a very good year.

New Year’s Resolution

Be on the lookout for other boaters. One of our many strengths is talking to others about our hobby or sharing a story about one of our adventures. “Word of mouth” or telling others about us is a great way to increase membership. Let’s make a goal to chat with at least one person within the next year, sharing information about our Club. Give out the Club newsletter. Invite someone to crew in one of the races or ask someone to join us for one of the socials. We have 80+ members on our roster. If you do this, I am sure we will continue to grow our membership and enjoy the company of other boat enthusiasts. We have too much fun to not share it with someone.

Yacht Club Membership Dues

Tom and Debbie Gossman are working on processing annual membership dues and creating the 2008 Club Directory.

Be aware we have had problems in the past with our post office. We do not want to lose any members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact Debbie as soon as possible by email (microedgeinc@aol.com) or by phone (956-371-9299) to make arrangements to receive your payment and to be listed in the 2008 Club directory.

If for any reason, you cannot continue your membership, please let Debbie know either by phone, email or send a note via post office.

Progress report on directory information

Although the response to emails and postage has been high, there are a dozen members who have not yet responded regarding information to be published in the 2008 Directory. Please take a moment and review last year’s information printed in the 2007 booklet. If any of the data is incorrect, please contact Debbie immediately.

Debbie plans on distributing the completed publication at the March social. Members, please thank Brian Mikiten for graciously helping the Club with printing the booklet.

Deadline fast approaching

The closing date for dues and directory information is no later than February 15. Debbie wishes to thank all of you who responded so quickly to her emails for verifications and/or modifications to the 2008 Club directory. Good Job!

Thank you and hope to see you at the February social.

Debbie Gossman
Publication Committee
Email: microedgeinc@aol.com
Cell phone: 956-371-9299

A New Burgee?

The Flag Officers are considering changing the club burgee and are looking for ideas from the membership. If you would like to submit an idea, please mail a drawing (or sketch) to:

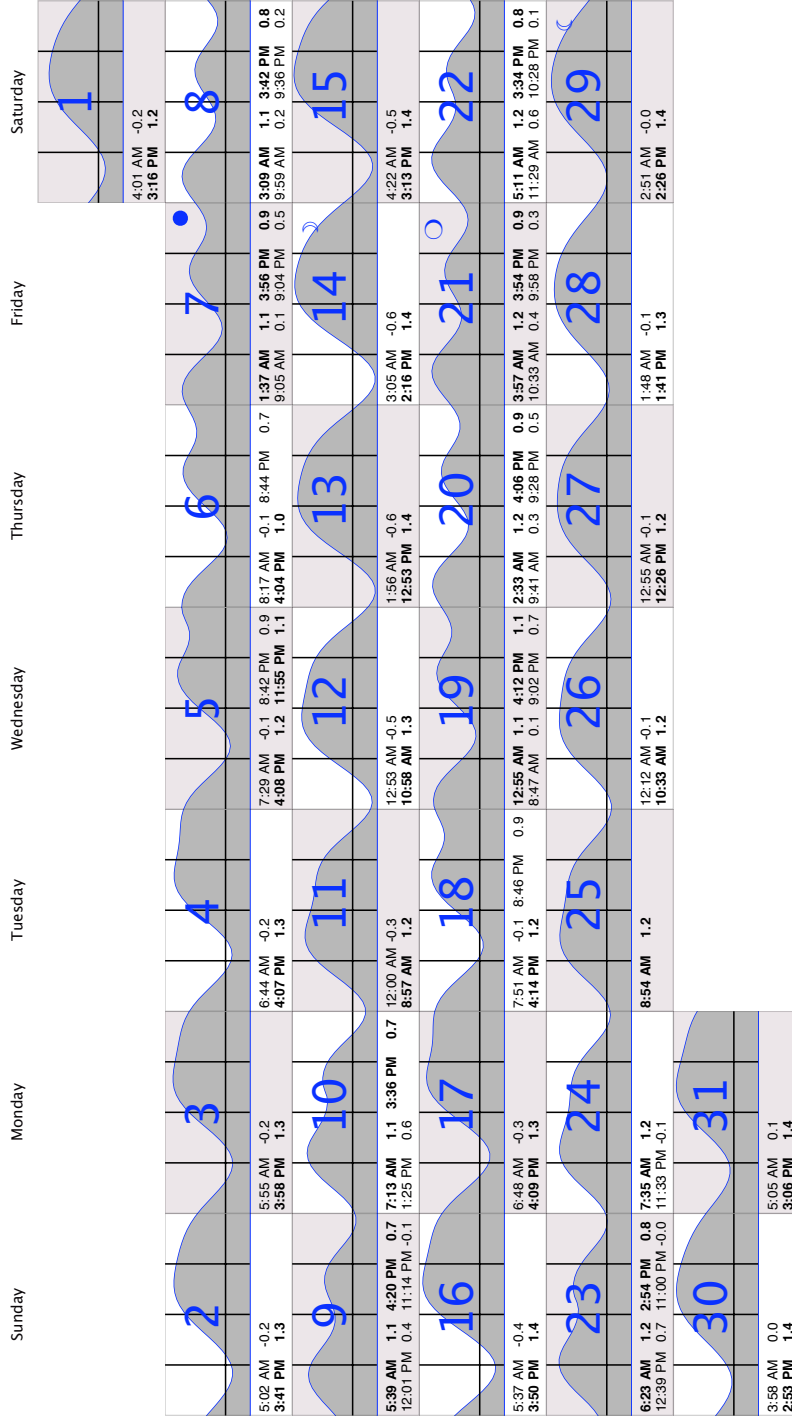
John Pinkerman
950 SW Garcia #615
Port Isabel, TX 78578
- or -
brendenke@cs.com

Diana Bryant has volunteered her artistic talents to draw the ideas to a standard size making them easier to compare. The Flag Officers will select a few to be voted on by the membership. Thanks Diana!



Queen Isabella Causeway (east end), Texas

March 2008





2008 Flag Officers

COMMODORE..... Wes Thom 956-233-7628
VICE COMMODORE..... Rocky Poovey 956-943-1540
REAR COMMODORE..... Brian Mikiten 210-863-5245
SECRETARY..... JoAnne Lesieutre 956-761-3169
TREASURER..... Tom Gossman 956-371-9299
FLEET CAPTAIN..... Jim Godfrey 956-943-4718
STEWARD..... Peggy Godfrey 956-943-6427
FLEET SURGEON..... Bob Christenson 956-486-7360
FLEET BARRISTER..... John Pinkerman 956-943-1082

Upcoming Calendar

March 8, 2008 - 6 P.M. Club Social
March 15, 2008 Spring Series Starts
March 16, 2008 Bay Race
March 22, 2008 Easter Egg Hunt
VERA CRUZ RACE

Reciprocal Cards Available

The 2008 Reciprocal Courtesy Cards from the Yachting Club of America are now available. If you would like to receive one, please contact me at 956-761-3169 or joanne38LT@sbcglobal.net.

Our club is listed in the Yachting Club of America directory so most other yacht clubs will accept our club's individual membership cards for admittance to their facilities.

JoAnne Lesieutre

Thanks to Jim and JoAnne for their contributions.

Brian Mikiten - Editor and Rear Commodore

For changes or comments email bmikiten@idworld.net