

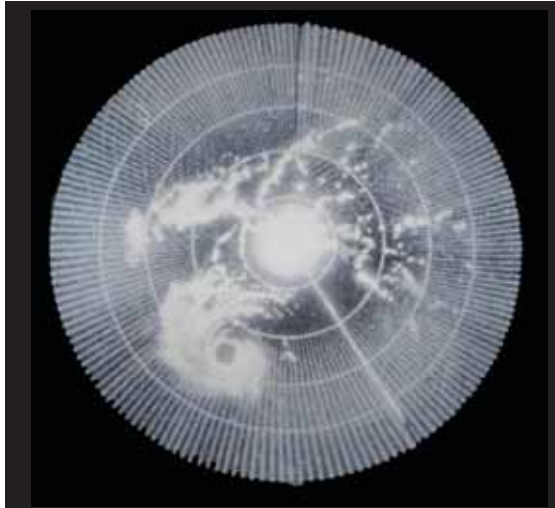
The winter has been kind to us in the lower Northeast. Maybe Syracuse doesn't agree, but the eastern offshore boating clan has been spared the expected ice and snow storms of norm. Most stored and sleeping vessels may be uncovered by now and, hopefully, a pre-launch checklist has been reviewed and is being activated.

Let me offer one item. I always emphasize the importance of checking drains. Over the past months, if the cockpit and deck drains have not been kept clean, they could have become blocked and water may have found its way below through deck hatch seams. Accumulated water can cause damage to woodwork, metal fittings and electrical wiring. Water below can originate from this or from broken scupper hoses. Check the hoses from cockpits and drains that carry water overboard since they may have expanded and cracked due to the formation of winter ice. While down in the bilge, check the proper operation of those sea cocks again. Stories of boats that continue to descend below their intended waterline upon launching never seem to end.

As new boat sales slow, as we experienced last season, the addition of optional equipment, also known as "new toys, to our current vessel's inventory increases. Radar units, on the list of desired items, have become more affordable. It wasn't that long ago that radar was introduced to the pleasure boat fleet. Back in 1956, the collision of the Andrea Doria and the Stockholm off Nantucket Island initiated the



by Michael Kurnides



expanded use and application of navigation rules to include radar. At that time radar was mostly limited to commercial vessels, with some exceptions. The collision prompted

proper use of radar at the International Conference for Safety at Sea in 1960 and again in 1972, recognizing radar as a valid aid to navigation.

A collision course is identified both visually and on a radar screen when the bearing (relative angle) to the object remains constant as the range (distance) decreases. On early radar units, the position information from the radar was transferred to a plotting sheet along with marking the time to determine if a collision course existed with the calculated closing speed. The next generation, using CRT tubes, made the targets clearer so they could be plotted right on the screen with a grease pencil. In both cases at least three observations were needed.

Modern technology in the past 10 years has produced radar instruments with target trails and the ability to click on a subject to get its speed, course and closest point of passing. Color screens, graphic overlays, satellite plotting and the combination of all of the above are now available. It sounds like big screen entertainment, but it has been accepted that this equipment may give captains a false sense of security while steaming through a fog, ignoring the basic rule to reduce speed in limited visibility. Interpretation of the screen can be difficult due to distortion, multiple echoes, and clutter. Small fiberglass boats are not as detectable as large metal ships. There are too many cases on file relating to pleasure boat collisions due to excessive speed in limited visibility. *continued on page 47*

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bility. We also should recognize that some groundings on record are attributed to an error in knowing the active range scale setting on the radar unit.

The navigation rules that apply to the use of radar are available on-line (Internet) under that title. A brief synopsis follows:

Rule 6 refers to safe speed on vessels with operational radar. It qualifies the limitations of the equipment, the scale in use, objects not detected in range, numbers of objects detected, state of the sea, wind, current and assessment of visibility with the radar used.

Rule 7 emphasizes the risk of collision and early warning procedures with radar plotting and the avoidance of assumptions made with scanty information.

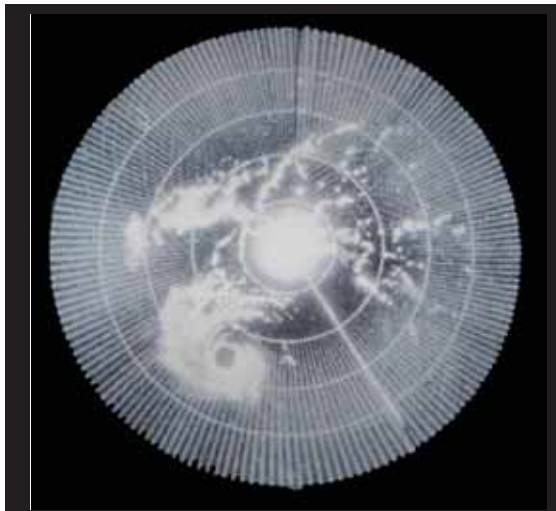
Rule 8 describes action to avoid a collision with reference to proper time, size of course alteration, sea room, passing distance and stopping or reversing if necessary.

Rule 19 which maybe should come first, applies to the conduct of vessels in restricted visibility not in sight of one another and responsibility in the determination of a developing situation, action to be taken and the avoidance of improper course alterations of the vessel forward of the beam.

Anyone exposed to a navigation course, whether Coast Guard, Power Squadron or private institution, was taught that dead reckoning was a valuable tool in determining your location when instruments like Loran, GPS, and



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depth sounders are inoperable.

Of course, a nautical chart is needed. Total dependency on electronic instruments if not recommended. The latest navigation equip-

ment is most impressive and exciting to use, but remember.... nothing is infallible

At this time of the year, a self-imposed consideration is in order for surveys and the types to be performed. The most comprehensive is the pre-purchase survey. This includes a full examination of the structural integrity, all systems of propulsion, fuel, electrical, machinery, plumbing, navigation instruments, cosmetic and over-all maintenance, if available. A sea trial and both in and out-of-the-water examinations with full reports should be provided. An insurance survey is similar to the above, but with the emphasis on the integrity and safety for the intended use. The insurance company wants to know that the vessel is an acceptable risk and what its market value is. A sea trial may not be required. Appraisal inspections are requested to determine the value of the vessel usually in legal, donation and estate settlement cases.

Damage inspections are just as that sounds, with a possible request for recommendation of the cost of repair and probable cause of damage.

In preparation for survey, the vessel should be made ready, hopefully clean or shipshape, with miscellaneous gear available for inspection. Sails, instruments, dinghies and outboard motors are examples of miscellaneous gear. Cleared lockers, refrigerators and bait holds without last season's bait are appreciated.

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