

# Boating Tips

## RBOC's 40th Anniversary: Who the Heck are These Guys?

In their own words: The boater advocacy group Recreational Boaters of California [RBOC] is celebrating its 40th anniversary as the non-profit statewide advocacy organization that works to protect and enhance the interests of the state's boating public.

Over the years, RBOC's efforts have involved virtually every aspect of boating that is considered in laws and regulations, including boat operating requirements, equipment, education, fuel and property taxes, registration fees, navigation, and berthing rates. Through RBOC's advocacy, boaters have avoided many unnecessary and unreasonable costs or restrictions on their recreational activities.



RBOC develops and pursues policy positions as boating issues arise. One example is the organization's current support of efforts to preserve and enhance water quality with the application of unbiased, sound scientific studies.

The organization was initially named Boat Owners Associated Together, Inc. [BOAT], and adopted the RBOC name in 1982.

RBOC has benefited from the voluntary directors who manage the organization and its government affairs program. It has engaged the services of professional lobbyists since 1968. In 1971, the group hired Jerry Desmond to lobby on its behalf – an arrangement that continues today with the Desmond & Desmond firm.

In 1992, RBOC began a partnership with BoatU.S. as the national representative of boater interests. This has enabled California boaters to have an effective voice at the national level, as well as the regional and statewide levels. RBOC serves



BY KEVIN O'LEARY

on the BoatU.S. National Advisory Council and BoatU.S. serves on the RBOC Board.

RBOC is active within several forums as an advocate and liaison within its ongoing efforts to promote and protect the interests of California's recreational boaters. These include the California State Legislature, California Governor's Administration, California Resources Agency, California Department of Boating and Waterways, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Water Resources, California State Lands Commission, California Board of Equalization, California Air Resources Board, California Boating and Waterways Commission, California State Water Resources Control Board, California Regional Water Quality Control Boards, California Water Plan, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Delta Protection Commission, Delta Vision-SCG Group, CALFED, BoatU.S. National Advisory Council, California Clean Boating Network, San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and UC Sea Grant

Program-Invasive Species Advisory Committee.

**(Whoa! Say all that three times fast!)**

Visit RBOC online at [www.rboc.org](http://www.rboc.org) for the latest updates, press releases, calls-to-arms and reports on government relations issues impacting the recreational boating community.

RBOC personnel: **Walt Kadyk**, President; **Anne Sacks**, Vice President – South; **David Breninger**, Vice President – North; **Lenora Clark**, Past President; **Bob White**, Secretary – Treasurer Legislative Advocates; **Jerry Desmond**, Executive Vice President; and **Jerry Desmond Jr.**, Director of Government Relations.

Contact RBOC at: 925 L Street Suite 220, Sacramento CA 95814, 916/441-4166, [www.rboc.org](http://www.rboc.org).

### **Some Questions for Mr. Kadyk**

OK, now that we have a better understanding of who RBOC is, let's dig a little deeper... I asked Mr. Walt Kadyk to answer some questions our readers might be interested in:

**Q. Exactly how is RBOC funded?**

*A. The voluntary contributions received from thousands of families throughout the state provide most of the funding for our non-profit organization. We are also very appreciative of the contributions we receive from the respected national boating organization BoatU.S.*

**Q. What are RBOC's three most important goals for 2008?**

*A. First, ensuring that as the State of California addresses a \$16 billion deficit for the upcoming year, the significant fees and*

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taxes paid by boaters are not re-directed from essential programs and services.

Second, obtaining relief from a federal court-imposed requirement that the USEPA develop a permit program that would place unreasonable costs and burdens on California boaters as well as boaters across the country.

Third, enacting a measure that will increase safety on the waterways by phasing-in a requirement that motorboat operators pass a state-approved test.

**Q. What were the significant achievements RBOC made in 2007?**

A. RBOC worked effectively as the Governor and Assembly Speaker developed AB 118, a bill crafted late in the session that is aimed at developing funding mechanisms to jump-start efforts to combat greenhouse gas emissions. We appreciate the inclusion of provisions sought by RBOC that ensure that the use of boater-generated fees will also involve the development of new vessel technologies, and that provide a recreational boater representative on the new advisory committee.

RBOC also worked successfully with other taxpayer interests to prevent a proposal presented by the Board of Equalization to revise its rule so that the express terms of a club port lease could be more easily ignored, thereby enabling the value of the club's possessory interest and property taxes to increase.

RBOC also worked to enhance an open and productive dialog with the many boating stakeholders as well as our elected and appointed officials. Last year, this approach produced a tremendous product with regard to a California-specific proposal for boater operation certification.

**Q. What are some of the long-term goals/challenges of RBOC?**

A. We are finding that individual boaters, as well as their clubs and organizations, all recognize that there are both immediate and long-term challenges to our livelihood. These include an increasing state population and the resulting congestion on our waterways as well as our roads. They include a renewed interest in protecting the environment and reversing the damage that occurred through the past century. They also include an economic climate



Mr. Walt Kadyk, President of Recreational Boaters of California (RBOC).

*that, without caution, can erode the programs and services that have provided California's unique and extraordinary boating opportunities.*

*One of the key aspects that I believe attracts talented and involved individuals to lend their skills to our RBOC Board of Directors is a strongly held belief that our direct participation in the government processes will have a positive impact on boating. The organization has become increasingly pro-active, engaged and strategic. But the foundation of our efforts time and again is the strong voice of boaters who voice their opinions and beliefs. This will only become more important as we continue.*

### **Kevo's Tip:**

Congratulations on the 40th anniversary of the Recreational Boaters of California. It's good to know recreational boaters in California have an outfit like yours looking out for their interests on state and national legislative matters. Keep up the good work!

**As always, feedback is appreciated. I can be reached at 925/890-8428 or kevo@yachtsman magazine.com. Be safe & happy boating! 🚤**