**Newport Mooring Association Summer 2017 Newsletter**

Your Newport Mooring Association (NMA) has accomplished a lot to be proud of in both 2016 and 2017.

If you haven’t paid your dues for 2017, please do so now. It’s money well spent.

Please send a check for $35 or more to:

**Newport Mooring Association, P.O. Box 1118, Newport Beach, CA 92659-1118**

Also consider attending the Newport Mooring Association’s annual meeting on October 25th at 6:30 PM at Marina Park, 1600 W. Balboa Blvd., Newport Beach. This meeting will feature speaker Dennis Durgan, the new Harbormaster of Newport Harbor. Dennis will describe all the new changes going on in Newport Harbor.

**Old News:**

In the Spring of 2016, annual mooring permit fees were reduced from over $55 per linear foot to $35 per linear foot. This was accomplished through a long term multi-year process that required the NMA to get involved in City of Newport Beach politics. The NMA is very pleased with the current slate of City Council members. As a group they have a much better understanding of the harbor than previous Councils and there are even a couple of well known yachtsmen on the current City Council.

**New News:**

A new Mooring Ordinance was passed on June 27, 2017 and the highlights are as follows:

* Mooring transferability, which was due to sunset in 2020, has been restored.
* A mooring owner/permittee may have a maximum of two moorings.
* A mooring may be transferred no more than one time per year.
* The fee for a mooring permit transfer is 75% of the current annual fee.
* The market for moorings will now be more transparent. All sales will be listed on the City’s website.
* Private parties are still not allowed to rent moorings. Only the City and the 3 Yacht Clubs can do so. The City retains the proceeds from renting private moorings for the administration of the Tidelands which benefits all users.
* If the City rents your mooring, and it is subsequently damaged during use when rented, the City will be responsible for timely repair.
* The annual cost for a mooring is currently $35.43 per linear foot and may increase annually but annual increases are not to exceed 2% per year.

**Really New News:**

The City of Newport Beach took over the task of Mooring Management from the Orange County Sherriff’s Harbor Patrol on July 1, 2017. A new Harbor Operations Department has been created as a subset of the City’s Public Works Department, and a new position of Harbormaster has been created to oversee the Harbor Operations Department. The new Harbormaster is Dennis Durgan, a very well known local yachtsman who has a lifetime of familiarity with Newport Harbor.

The Harbor Operations Department has taken over the processing of mooring permits and transfers, as well as assisting visitors with temporary rental moorings. The Department is located at the City’s new Marina Park facility at 1600 W. Balboa Blvd., Newport Beach, CA 92663. Staff is available daily from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM on VHF channel 16, telephone 949-270-8159, or by Email at harbormaster@newportbeachca.gov. The late hours are to accommodate visiting yachtsmen looking for a temporary mooring. Other business is best accomplished during normal business hours.

The Orange County Sherriff’s Harbor Patrol remains a presence in the harbor and is still responsible for law and order, especially with respect to criminal activity. However now you will also see several small craft run by the City of Newport Beach that are identified with the word Harbormaster on them. There are three vessels currently in use -- one is a center console Boston Whaler and the other two are catamaran style repurposed crew coach boats. These vessels are known as Harbormaster1, Harbormaster2, and Harbormaster3 and the personnel driving these boats are newly hired part time employees of the City known as “Harborworkers”. These boat drivers are a very capable group of 13 individuals and the group is made up of a good cross section of people who have spent a lot of time around the water and on boats. If you are reading this newsletter there is a chance you might know one or more of them as the group includes ex local policemen, ex local firefighters, ex and current local lifeguards, and at least one ex local Yacht Club Dockmaster in the group.

These personnel are on the water a lot and are there to assist boaters in various ways but it is important to note that they are not law enforcement personnel. Their jobs are mainly to be “Ambassadors on the Water” and their main function is to help people on the water who might need some help. Visiting yachtsmen will now be guided to the correct mooring assigned to them and given help hooking up to the mooring if help is wanted or needed. The net result of this should be less damage to mooring lines from visiting yachts which will be a benefit to many NMA members. The new Harborworkers will also be helping kayakers, paddleboarders, and boaters who seem to having a problem out on the bay and will hopefully engage the local sea lion population when they are seen lounging on our moored boats. All three of the Harbormaster boats are outfitted with a pool net and a large trash can so that the drivers can pick up any obvious floating trash that they see. In effect, the three boats will act as a large “pool sweep” in the harbor which will benefit everyone.

It would be reasonable to expect that these boats and their drivers might someday be involved in code enforcement with regards to the moorings, as it is obvious that the City now has the personnel and equipment in place to better enforce mooring code violations. It would probably be a good time to make sure the right vessel is on the right mooring, your mooring lines are looking good, and that your current insurance and registration are on file with the City of Newport Beach. If you are living aboard your vessel you might want to make sure you are properly registered with the City as a liveaboard. It might just be a good time to review all of Title 17 of the City of Newport Beach’s Municipal Code which is known as the Harbor Code. Section 17.60.040 deals specifically with Mooring Permits. You can easily find these online with a Google search but another good starting point would be the new and very good City of Newport Beach Harbor Operations website: [www.newportharbor.org](http://www.newportharbor.org)

This website now shows charts of all the mooring fields and it also has a link to the new log of previous mooring permit transactions. Both of these should be of great interest to NMA members.

The City’s Harbor Operations Department has installed 10 new large moorings out in front of Marina Park and adjacent to mooring fields H and J. These moorings are in place to accommodate large visiting vessels in the 60 to 100 foot range and were built as sandline moorings similar to what are used at Catalina Island. They are different from any other moorings in Newport Harbor, and it is possible that these moorings are a testbed for the idea of using sandline moorings throughout the harbor where there are currently double moorings with floating lines. If all the double moorings were to become sandline moorings, there would be far less obstructions in the harbor as all the floating lines would be removed and maybe 40% of the mooring cans too.  If this change were to happen it would make navigating the harbor a little easier for all, but especially for novices -- apparently novice Duffy drivers wrapping their props in a floating line connecting a double mooring together is an everyday occurrence and often happens at night. Yes, the bottom of Newport Harbor is not a pristine sand bottom like Catalina so any sandlines used in Newport Harbor are bound to be somewhat dirty when they are picked up. How dirty is the question and how manageable will the dirty sandline problem be. Is it even a problem? Is it a bigger problem in some mooring fields than in others? Will techniques in onboard sandline management evolve to make this a non-issue? Both the City and the NMA will be watching with interest as the experiment unfolds.