

Independence of Yacht Club Mooring Fields

My name is Dan Gribble. I sent a letter to Assistant City Manager Carol Jacobs and to all the Harbor Commissioners relating my recent experience with the Harbor Master regarding the use of my mooring at BYC-118 by a visiting yachtsman friend. I will not repeat the contents of that letter, but would like it to be included in the official record. The subject dealt with the management and control of the Yacht Club designated mooring fields, and specifically that of Balboa Yacht Club.

As stated in my letter, it has been a long-held tradition and decades-long precedence that the Dockmasters of the respective Yacht Clubs manage and control the moorings within the Yacht Club designated fields, including but not limited to:

- The mooring equipment
- Which vessels are allowed on the moorings and for what length of time
- The condition of the vessels on the moorings
- Required documentation of the vessels on the moorings

Historically the Dockmasters have taken on the responsibility for these tasks and have done so in accordance with the spirit of the law and done it well. Only recently was this situation questioned when unexpectedly the Harbor Master's office intervened as explained in my letter.

As a yachtsman myself, having spent the last three years sailing our boat nearly 20,000 miles from the East Coast of the US to the West Coast, I know very well what it is like to visit a new and unknown port. We visited well over a dozen different countries and dozens of harbors, not to mention the many we visited on the US coasts. I can tell you that the experience can either be quite simple and pleasant, or quite the opposite. It was always a very gratifying experience to meet a local who willingly assisted us with the local regulations, local marine knowledge, and just made us feel welcome and valued. In the instances where that did not occur, particularly in a foreign port, we felt uncomfortable, confused, and sometimes even taken advantage of or threatened. I believe it is in the best interests of everyone concerned, from the visiting yachtsman to the City of Newport Beach, that we act as welcoming ambassadors to these visitors. As members of Yacht Clubs, we have a unique ability to make first contact through our reciprocal yacht club policies to welcome visiting yachtsmen and not only make them feel at home, but to make them want to return and tell their friends. The practice of allowing such visitors to utilize available moorings within our Yacht Club fields, without having to go through excessive paperwork, complexity of regulations, and added cost, and to do so in compliance with the spirit of the law, is a tradition we must maintain. The current wording of Title 17 in this regard creates an unnecessary obstacle to obtaining that outcome.

As an example, a visitor wanting to borrow a mooring can do so for up to 90 days but the person loaning the mooring can only do so for 60 consecutive days, requiring the visitor to move to a different mooring after 60 days. To further complicate the process, one must fill out

three separate identical forms, one for each month, rather than simply have one form include all the dates. One might expect such complexity perhaps in a Banana Republic bureaucracy but certainly not here in Newport Beach where we supposedly wish those visitors to be our guests, spend money, and leave to tell their friends to come and do the same.

In conclusion, I would like to ask the Harbor Commission, in their review and re-write of Title 17, to change and clarify the ambiguous language of section 17.60.040 related to the Yacht Club designated moorings such that the governance and control of those moorings extends to the privately held moorings within those fields that belong to Yacht Club members and not just to those moorings held specifically by the Yacht Clubs.

Thank you for your time.

Dan Gribble

BYC Member

NMA Board Member

Owner – Mooring BYC-118

CEO – Boatswain's Locker

Owner – SY Brigadoon