

# 2021 HOWARD PINKLEY AWARD



Howard Pinkley Trophy Nomination Letter:

I would like to nominate Captain Bob Lang (Commodore I-LYA) for this award. Captain Bob is the 1984 Past Commodore of West River Yacht & Cruising Club and the current Commodore for Inter-Lake Yachting Association and the current secretary for West River Yacht & Cruising Club. These are only a few of his accomplishments as we know from reading about him in BoatUS this year (attached below). Capt. Bob is also an active member at Detroit Beach Boat Club.



BOATUS Article:

For many people, a love of boating and an appreciation of safety go hand in hand. For Capt. Bob Lang, it is also his passion. Lang is the commodore of the Inter-Lake Yachting Association, an organization of approximately 140 clubs around the Great Lakes. Each year, the association holds power and sail regattas, and a juniors week at Put-In-Bay, Ohio. Lang, 73, who lives nearby in Michigan, is an instructor in the juniors program.



"I really try to stress to the clubs to get juniors involved in this because it really is a worthwhile program," Lang says. "You do learn a lot, and it's all about safety, camaraderie, and making friendships."

During junior week, participants learn docking, man overboard, knots, general seamanship, and chart plotting and navigation — using both technology and traditional methods.

"I'm an old-school guy," Lang says. "When we're out on the boat, I always have a chart right there and try to plot the course using the parallel rules and following the compass. I tell the kids that the modern-day navigation stuff is great. I mean, I use my chart plotter all the time for sure, but I always have a chart there, and I'm always checking my position and looking at the paper chart. Also, I continually look around to know exactly where I'm at. I try to teach those tried-and-true techniques to the kids because, like I tell them, at some point your navigation equipment may fail."

When it comes to tying knots, part of the time is spent teaching new knots, and part of the time is correcting bad habits that the juniors may have picked up from their parents. Lang says he still uses the classic "rabbit comes out of the hole and around the tree" for teaching kids how to tie a bowline.

Once the juniors have gone through the classes, there's a sailing regatta and a powerboat regatta, where they get to test their skills in docking, boat-handling, and man-overboard contests.

Lang teaches his juniors both modern technology and old-school navigation.

Lang himself began boating with his parents at a young age, then became involved in the United States Power Squadrons. He dropped out for a while as he raised a family, but rejoined when his son was a young teenager and beginning to go through the boating classes.

"I thought, you know what, I really like this again, so I joined the board, and after getting involved, really enjoyed the studies and teaching the Safe Boating class. Then for eight or nine years I was the Power Squadrons' educational officer and always taught all the classes for the Safe Boating class — usually 12-week classes. I'd tell lots of stories from my personal boating experience to students in our junior program as well as the adults. They seemed to enjoy those stories."

That passion for teaching safe boating today extends beyond the Inter-Lake Association. This summer Capt. Bob was asked by the recreation department of a local marina to teach a four-week class. His hope is that not only more kids will take the classes, but that adults will be inspired to as well.

"Hopefully, some of that will wear off, and some of their parents who think they know it all will decide, 'Oh you know what? My daughter is a little bit smarter than me!'" he smiles, "and maybe they'll sign up for the adult classes."

He is a great sportsman and encourages everyone to get involved which includes the youth of our boating community (which will be future boaters). Capt. Bob with his busy schedule has attended the cocktails parties, commodore's balls (that have taken place), attended all the I-LYA regattas, has been an active participant in I-LYA & AYC events.

P/C Dawn Lang Shoemaker