PART III – SEAMANSHIP AND TOWING

A. BOAT SEAMANSHIP
Getting underway, mooring and operating in proximity to traffic and objects are easily explained in the classroom, but since every boat acts differently, it is a good idea to practice your seamanship techniques while on patrol. Practice around the dock under different wind conditions and also with the use of a spring line. Practice holding a station on an object in the water. Practice man overboard and anchoring.

A major part of seamanship to a sailor is courtesy on the water. Take care your wake does not create a hazard to canoes, kayaks, swimmers and fishermen. Remember that the boat crossing from your right has the right of way (even if he has never learned the rules). Changing course early and amply when meeting shows your intent and is good defensive driving (in sailor talk : The Rule of Good Seamanship).

B. TOWING
Towing looks and is simple when done right. Nevertheless, take care to apply a few important rules of seamanship, like keeping the towline away from your propeller. While the skipper steers, have the crew stand by with a boat hook to ensure that the tow line doesn't foul the propeller.

**Stern Tows:** Toss a heaving line to use as a messenger or simply pass the towline. Never toss a line with a heavy object on the end. A towline to tow boats on this lake needs to be $\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter or larger. Have the towline fixed to a strong point on the boat to be towed such as the towing eye on the bow of a single hulled boat.

If you tow a pontoon boat by only one pontoon it will tow off to the side possibly damaging docks and moored boats you hope to drive by. Resolve this by passing the towline through the either the center eye or the eyes on both pontoons of the towed boat and back to the standing part making a triangle (or rig one of the towed boat's lines though the eyes in a loop which you tie to). Remember to tie your towline in such a way that you can always slip free of it in an emergency (i.e. man overboard).

Start off slow, taking strain gradually on the towline as the towed boat turns and begins to come along. Once underway, moving easy, build up to a reasonable tow speed that does not tax the equipment. The maximum towing speed should not exceed 6 knots for equipment and boats on this lake. Consider the outcome when something breaks under heavy strain. Note also that tows don't make sharp turns. Decrease speed gradually for your approach to the dock, noting that the towed vessel has no brakes as it approaches your stern.

One needn't be fancy in getting the boat to its dock. Using slow speed and getting them close enough to toss a line or paddle in is better than risking damage to boats and equipment.

**Side Tows:** Rig four lines as in the diagram on the next page:
- **Line 1 (Bow line):** goes from bow to bow.
- **Line 2 (Backing strap):** from towed vessel aft to towing boat.
- **Line 3 (Towing strap):** from towed vessel forward to tow boat
- **Line 4 (Stern line):** from stern to stern from outside of towed vessel behind the outboard.

Hand loop end of line to fix to cleat on vessel being towed. If no cleats, use stanchions or rails to tie.
Make sure towed vessel is situated so that it's stern is about three feet forward of the stern of the towing vessel in order to allow steering to
both port and starboard. Follow guidance under Stern Tows about how to begin the tow, speed to maintain, and releasing the towed boat.

C. KEY KNOTS FOR YOUR PATROL

1. Tying To a Cleat
   (1) Make a complete turn around the cleat.
   (2) Lead the line over the top of the cleat and around the horn to form a figure eight.
   (3) If possible, make two more figure eights.

2. Clove Hitch
   (1) Make a turn around and under, then again around and under so both loops are identical.
   (2) Finish up a post mooring with two half hitches for security.
3. Two Half Hitches
(1) Bring the bitter end under and over the standing part to make the first loop (half hitch).
(2) Continue by passing under and over, back on itself so it looks the same as the first loop.

4. Stopper Knot (Rolling Hitch)
Good over a rail, rope or towed pole for friction to hold sideways motion.
(1) With the bitter end make a turn over and under the second line and pass the link over itself.
(2) Pull taut and make another turn with the bitter end "a" taking it over, then under, then back over itself. More of these helps more friction.
4 Pull taut and tie a half hitch going across to the other side of your wrap..

5. Square Knot
(1) Tie a single overhand knot
(2) Tie another so it mirrors (right and left reversed) the first one. The ends come out together.
(4.) If it doesn’t look like this it’s a “granny knot!”

6. Bowline
(1) Make an overhand loop (the lake)
(2) Have the bitter “cotton mouth” end come up out of the lake, around the tree and back into its hole.
(3) Pull your knot nice and tight.