



The Cruising Club of America
Membership Committee

Candidate Qualifications Guidelines and Process

The constitution of The CCA states: *“A person eligible for membership in the Club must be a sailor and a person of acceptable character and personality who has demonstrated his or her ability to handle or command and navigate and pilot a yacht or small vessel at sea, and who has had sufficient cruising experience.”*

And from the Blue Book and website: *“At its core, the CCA is a collection of passionate, seriously accomplished, ocean sailors making adventurous use of the seas. All members have extensive offshore boat handling, seamanship, and command experience honed over many years.”* As this quote indicates, we are a group of sailors who love offshore sailing, and want to share it with others. CCA members have done truly inspiring things when exploring the world by boat, and those exploits have contributed to the sport in so many ways - safety, technology, and adventure publishing, to mention just a few. You are a part of that group - which is no small feat - and we hope you know other fellow sailors who can join us. We love to welcome any qualified (and especially young!) new candidates. The process for doing that is listed on our website (“Propose a Member”) and it is not difficult. If you have any questions at all, I hope you will contact your station's Membership Committee Chair.

The Membership Committee is charged with interpreting these words as they apply to each candidate. By its nature, this is a subjective process requiring weighing all factors including opportunities available to candidates in various geographies.

The CCA is committed to achieving greater diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the Club and fostering an environment that is welcoming to all qualified bluewater sailors.

To assist the Proposer and Committee in considering the candidate, we ask that Proposers, Seconders and Letter Writers be able to answer the following questions in the affirmative:

1. Would you like to take a long passage with the candidate aboard a small vessel?
2. Would you enjoy the company of the candidate in the cabin of a small yacht?
3. In your opinion, is the candidate competent to “handle or command and navigate or pilot a yacht or small vessel at sea”?
4. Would you be willing to have the candidate in command of your yacht for an extended cruise?
5. Would the candidate take a real and active interest in Club affairs?
6. Are other members likely to feel as you do about the candidate?

In evaluating candidates, the Committee refers to the following guidelines:

Re: *“a sailor and a person of acceptable character and personality”*

- "A sailor." This word does not exclude a seaman by trade or profession. It has long ceased to mean only a rope-and-canvas seaman; the mariner in power is likewise a sailor. We consider, however, that experience in sail is extremely important, and that a candidate who cruises under power should have established his or her qualifications under sail.
- Except in exceptional circumstances, the Proposer, Secunder or a Letter Writer has sailed with the candidate under circumstances in which the candidate's character and ability to handle or command a small vessel at sea has been demonstrated.
- All letter writers know the candidate.
- Letters clearly address all qualifications of the candidate. The details described in and quality of the letters carry considerable weight.

Re: *"demonstrated his or her ability to handle or command and navigate and pilot a yacht or small vessel at sea"*

- The primary way that ability is demonstrated is in command, offshore. Being in command means being the person who is ultimately responsible for the safety of the crew and vessel. While this sets a high bar, such ability may also be demonstrated by significant experience in positions of leadership and responsibility while offshore as part of a crew, such as double-handed or similar "No. 2" role, as documented in the résumé and letters.
- "At Sea" means multiple extended passages, e.g. 500 NM, away from easy shelter and of at least three or four days' duration, offshore or along an inhospitable coast, e.g. Vancouver-San Francisco, San Diego-Cabo San Lucas, which posed a real challenge to seamanship and navigation. A passage along a well-marked coast with numerous available harbors falls short of being "at sea".
- Such experience has been within the past 18 years and the candidate is still actively cruising or racing.

Re: *"sufficient cruising experience"*

Our constitution tells us *"The objects of The Cruising Club of America, Inc. (the "Club")...are to promote cruising and racing by amateurs... to stimulate interest in seamanship, navigation and handling of small vessels, ...to gather... information which may be of assistance to members in cruising."* It is clear that cruising is central to The Cruising Club of America.

- The Committee views *"cruising"* broadly. A candidate's experience should include current, active cruising, which may include deliveries, coastal cruising or offshore racing.
- A sailing record that shows consistency of interest and a variety of experience is helpful.

The Committee looks to the Proposer and Station Membership Committee to apply these guidelines and to the Station Membership Committee to consult with the Club Membership Committee early in the process.

Approved by the Governing Board 19 January 2021