



CSTS Newsletter



Oct 2026

The Captain's Log with Katie

One summer in, and I thought this would be a great time to reintroduce myself if you haven't had the chance to meet me or hear my story. My name is Katie Wolfe and I was born and raised here in Annapolis. My mom was the sailor in the family and was determined to make all of us love it. I started out in an opti at sailing school, and I hated every minute of it.

I came back to sailing over a decade later after being sent home from college during the pandemic. I needed a hobby to get away from online school and connect with people again. I was hooked. I started racing almost every single day and signed up for my first offshore race. Then I found CSTS. On my first sail, I was completely overwhelmed with new procedures and all the skills and hours I needed to log. But, sticking with it was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

I sailed my first block in '23 and then they hired me as the Director of Basic Sail Training. After two summers on that team, I took the opportunity to get back on the big boats this February.

I got to learn so much this summer. I want to thank everyone who participated and helped Fran and I get up to speed.

Fran at the Foredeck

My first summer on blocks was full of beautiful sunrises, surprising underway meals and excellent sailing. This is the best job in the world. Where else can you do what you love with so many people who are also passionate about sailing? The volunteers mentoring our Midshipmen bring immense talent and dedication to preparing the next generation for the fleet. Thank you for your incredible generosity, time, and expertise—you are the backbone of this program. Because the marine environment is constantly changing, our opportunity to learn from the water and one another never ends. I look forward to building on this momentum during Fall training.

Vision for the Future

I believe in this program and its ability to make stronger leaders. Personally, I wouldn't have gotten this far without participating in it. One lesson I have learned is that there is no growth without change. While we appreciate the program's history, we must look to its future.

We've already gotten so many great ideas from you all about how to improve the program and we are always open to new ones. We'll be trying different ways of operating so I ask that you remain open-minded and constructive with feedback. Please read through the program updates section to see some of these changes.

Program Updates

D-Qual Boards: Effective immediately we are implementing oral boards into the D-Qual process. The offshore team has been doing this for the past year and the overall team knowledge has improved greatly! To schedule your board, please reach out to me.

For already qualified volunteers, we'll be looking for experienced folks to sit in on the boards. This will force us to have more conversations and to think critically about the way we do things and why.

DNAS: CDR Aho is set to retire from the Navy in the next few months. Dixon Smith, USN, Vice Admiral (Ret.) is taking over as acting DNAS.

Google classroom: We will no longer have blackboard access so we're moving to google classroom this winter. You'll all receive an invite to join this winter.

B-Qual requirement: The B-Qual is now an official requirement before starting 44 training. It provides a base of knowledge for everyone that comes through this program.

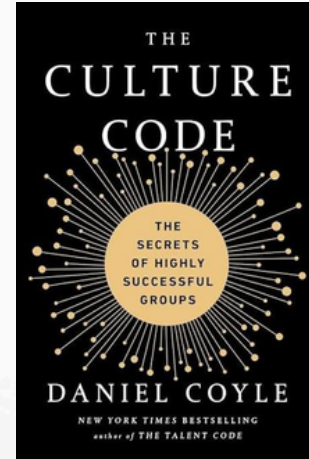
PII Management: We are no longer able to share email addresses. We are working on a voluntary contact sheet that you'll be able to join soon.

Craig's Words of Wisdom

The sail loft just reminded me that we can extend the life of the sails by keeping the sail cover on as long as possible. Material degradation accelerates with exposure to the sun's UV rays.

Leadership Corner

The newsletters are going to include a leadership corner. This could be a book recommendation, an activity to better understand your leadership style or leadership coaching tips. This book was recommended by one of our Ensigns.



“The Culture Code” by Daniel Coyle

“Why do certain groups add up to be greater than the sum of their parts, while others add up to be less?” This book explores how some groups work together seamlessly and others never seem to jell. The key to building a collaborative culture hinges on: building safety, sharing vulnerability, and establishing purpose.

CSTS brings people together in small units so they can work together to accomplish a shared goal. Being a good leader requires learning about what it takes to create a cohesive team that can communicate well. “Culture is a set of living relationships working toward a shared goal. It’s not something you are. It’s something you do.” Reading this book will help you become a more effective leader giving you a keen look into what it takes to create the culture you are looking for as we foster for our Midshipman into future leaders.



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