

**Venetian Night**  
Lighted Boat Parade

**Methods for Lighting Your Boat**

by Jack Niemi

**Generator** – an easy method is to place a portable gasoline generator on your boat. You can power almost any amount of lights and decorations, depending on the size of the generator. This method works well if you want to use older incandescent (non-LED) Christmas lights, as they draw more power. Another successful technique involves the use of lighted Christmas lawn ornaments strategically placed around the boat. The main disadvantage of a generator is the noise they can make.

**Power Inverter** – a power inverter will invert the power from your battery's DC current to AC. Inverters can be purchased at many places such as Radio Shack in Clare. Harbor Freight Tools (Saginaw, Flint, Lansing, metro Detroit) sells a 200 watt inverter for \$21.99, and a 400 watt inverter for \$27.99. They have spring clamps that clip onto boat battery terminals, and can also plug into a power outlet. These work well for lighting the newer LED Christmas lights, as a string of 100 mini-LED lights uses about 7 watts of power. Add up the amount of watts that you intend to power and obtain an inverter with extra wattage. An inverter is simple to use and uses the power your engine is already generating. It is quieter than a generator and boat engine running at the same time. Inverters can also be used for powering items such as a laptop in a car when on a trip, providing you have purchased the correct size inverter.

**Twelve Volt Lights** – 12 volt lights can be powered directly from your boat's starting battery or extra batteries can be used. Boat lights, automobile, flashing lights, etc. can be powered with this method. 12 volt lights can be purchased at auto and boat supply retailers.

**Old School** – this most basic method involves Chinese lantern type decorations which you can light with flashlights. String them around your boat to create an effective and impressive presentation. Crew members can also dress in costume. Or, take advantage of modern technology and use light sticks to decorate yourselves and your boat. Your boat or vessel size can work in your favor as the possibilities are only limited by your imagination.