

RESACA ECHO

**The Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron
Sail and Power Boating News
Volume 34 Number 1
A Unit of the United States Power Squadrons®
District 21**



A View from the Bridge

Cdr Kay Polt, AP

With a turn of the page on the calendar, we say goodbye to the old and hello to the new. New friends, new adventures, new resolutions, new classes, new jobs, new property shed, new bridge, new year....

I have safely been to Shanghai, China and back and getting ready to head over there again for the month of January. My December trip to China was eventful. I got a lot of my work goals accomplished, but even more gratifying (for me at least) was that I was able to take one weekend and travel to the interior to the ancient city of Xi'an. This is where several peasant farmers discovered the 8th wonder of the world in 1974 – the 2200 year old Subterranean Terra Cotta Army of Emperor Qin Shi Huang – the first emperor of China. According to one book I bought in Xi'an, *"In Chinese history, almost all emperors paid special attention to two things. One was to try all means of gaining immortality, and, failing this, to at least build a grand mausoleum. Immortality was, of course, difficult in the best of times. Therefore an opulent mausoleum became the preoccupation of many who sat on the Dragon Throne."* King Qin was the one who conquered and unified the kingdoms of China and proclaimed himself Emperor. It took 700,000 men approximately 38 years to build this great underground mausoleum of palaces, flowing rivers of mercury, bronze birds and animals, chariots, horses and a vast terra cotta army of 8,000-10,000

statues. So far about 50,000 invaluable cultural artifacts have been unearthed over an area covering about 22 square miles. One of the fascinating discoveries was that after 2200 years under ground, the arrows and swords did not corrode and still had razor sharp edges. After analysis of these weapons, what was discovered is that these ancient people had learned the process of chrome plating. This is all the more amazing when you realize that modern man 'invented' chrome plating in the mid 1800's but it was not understood very well until the early 1900's. I know fellow LRGV members Boo and Bob Ewing have visited this site, as they are the ones who told me it was a "don't miss" while in China. I wish to thank them for their recommendation, because it surely was an amazing experience. If you can't get to China, Lin's Buffet in Brownsville has some life size replicas of the bronze chariots and horses displayed, and also the terra cotta warriors standing guard outside the front door. Rolando and I had supper there one night shortly after I got back, and I looked up and said "Hey, I saw the real ones of those on Sunday." We



had a long chat with one of the wait staff; he said he has been asked several times about them and never knew what they were. Now he can tell them. I think the Lin's in McAllen may also have replica's including terra cotta horses, but it has been a long time since I have been in that restaurant.

Now, back to Power Squadron activities.... Our new property shed is complete, and our property officer, Peter Pranis, reports that it is a fine shed. Many thanks again to those who helped prep the platform. Special thanks to Daniel Bauer and John Carey who spent extra time laying plastic and plywood, and spraying for bugs and weeds before the construction began.

The Engine Maintenance class is going strong, with many of the participants exclaiming "I didn't know that!" We are holding it at the Sportsman in San Benito, and they have many engines there for show and tell, which is great hands-on along with the "book learnin'".

Our nominations committee of P/C's Chris Rakestraw, BooBoo Lewis and Larry Lewis have been busy and successful in obtaining willing nominations for the incoming bridge positions. I know last Resaca Echo I announced that I would not take the Commander role for a second year. Well, I guess I changed my mind... With the understanding that if I end up having to take a job out of the valley, the remaining bridge will have to take over the leadership position, I have agreed to remain as Commander for the 2007-2008 year. I am trying very hard to find a job locally, anywhere from Matamoros to Reynosa, from Brownsville to McAllen. I have had a couple nibbles but nothing yet. Keep your fingers crossed and your prayers coming, and hopefully all will work out well in the end.

The remaining bridge nominations include: Executive Officer Luis Venegas, Education Officer Peter Pranis, Jr., Administrative Officer Jerry Carrillo, Secretary Barb Ketchum, Treasurer John Carey, Jr., Assistant XO Joyce Armstrong, and Assistant EdO Jerry Carrillo. Thank you to these fine people for agreeing to work with me during the coming year to make this one even better than the last. A complete list of all nominations, including Members at Large, Audit Committee, and Nominating Committee will be published before you even receive this Resaca Echo.

The Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday 27 January. This is where we officially vote in the new

bridge. This year we will hold this event at the Howard Johnson's Hotel in Harlingen. This meeting will include special appreciation for our squadron's Past Commanders. I felt it was appropriate to recognize these individuals for their dedication to our organization and for their continuing support going forward. LRGV hasn't particularly done this in the past, and I think it is long over due. If at all possible, please come and attend this meeting. Unfortunately my schedule has changed and I don't think I will be back from China by then. So I hope you all help can make it up for me by coming and honoring the past commanders.

We are finalizing the arrangements for our Change of Watch and Awards Ceremony, to be held on 10 March. We will most likely be at the Valley Greyhound Race Park in Harlingen. This will be a little different venue than in the past where we usually hold this on the island. But March 10th is sort of Spring Break time and we should probably avoid the island. The Race Park will have Live Greyhound racing the evening of our event and we will have our own private betting teller. This should be a great venue, with an interesting and fun twist. Mark your calendars for this event.

We are coming up on the All Valley Boat Show to be held Feb 9-10-11. We will need volunteers to help set up the Booth on Thursday 8 February. We will meet at 12:00 noon at Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen. And we will need volunteers to help man the booth during the boat show. Benefits include free admission to the boat show, and enough time to wander around and see what's new. This is where we meet the public and let them know who we are and what we do. Our 'product' is Boating Safety; this is where we get most all of our students who sign up to take the Boating Course. And as you are aware, from this class is where we get our new members. So please sign up to help with this once-a-year important event.

And speaking of Boating Course, we again will need volunteers to help teach the course. Please contact our Education Officer Peter Pranis to teach one or two sections. By spreading out the work load, we gain a lot of advantages. It keeps the work distributed so no one person has to put forth all the effort, and makes the time requirements manageable for all. And it makes it a LOT more interesting for the students. They especially like having different people teach the different topics, as opposed to listening to the same person all day every day. It keeps the class fresh and interesting.

I know it did for me. The class this year will be held at TSTC in Harlingen from 9am – 3pm, on consecutive Saturdays Feb 24, March 3, 10 and 17. The 17th will likely be the review and final exam, and also will be the “End of Class Party” where we invite the students and show them we can be a fun group of people.

Concurrent with the Boating Course we will be also holding the Seamanship class. During the past couple years we held the Seamanship course via self study. This year we will be having an actual classroom setting. Those of you who have not taken this class, here is a great opportunity to get that letter “S” behind your name.

And lastly, I wish to thank all who participated in the

District 21 Coop Charting Event that we held on December 1st. Your help with the hospitality suite, Christmas Party, and geodetic marker searches was wonderful. We had a great turnout both from our squadron and from the district. News articles from the squadrons who joined us had glowing reviews.... Thanks to all of you, we have maintained a great reputation for showing people a good time when they take the time to travel down to the southern tip of Texas. Cdr Clorinda McVinney’s message in the Fort Worth newsletter sums it up *“Many, many thanks to The Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron for being such fabulous hosts. Next time they have an event make it a point to pencil it in on your calendar. You will not be sorry!”*



Editor’s Note:
Anthony Luis Venegas

Another year gone to the seas of time. I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year holiday season. I know I did!

Anyways, me and my father, Luis Venegas, signed up for the engine maintenance course at the Sportsman in San Benito. It is a very interesting class. There is so much to learn in the class, and at the Sportsman they have many engines that they show us. The atmosphere is nice, and the teachers really know how to teach the subject. In the latest class, we started using the projector and the Power Point slideshows. We did a somewhat detailed overview of the first 5 chapters. So, if you are interested in joining, you’re only behind by 5 short chapters.

To all you boaters, have fun at sea. Happy Boating!

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Any article appearing in this publication is to be assumed as representing the opinions of the author and is not to be considered as reflecting the policy of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron or USPS® unless so designated. Contributors are welcome to mail their copy to the address above or send it via e-mail to the above e-mail address. The editor prefers copy be submitted in MSWord, but will accept any text article. Pictures are welcome, either by e-mail or regular mail. This is your newsletter. Please feel free to contribute.

<p>Bridge 2006 -2007 Commander Kathryn E. Polt, AP Executive Officer James F. Guffey, S Educational Officer Peter P. Pranis, Jr., AP Administrative Officer Gerardo Carrillo, P Secretary Barbara Ketchum, S Treasurer John B. Carey, Jr., JN Asst Executive Officer Joyce N. Armstrong, S</p>	<p>Members at Large Daniel Bauer Mike Dodson, JN William A. Rutledge, AP Stuart Simpson, AP Arthur Wilhelmi, AP Jeri Wilhelmi, P</p>
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-WANTED-

DISTRICT 21 SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT OF
CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE ENFORCEMENT



"THE POSSUM" MALLETT



"WHOA NELLIE" MOORE

"WHOA NELLIE" WAS CONVICTED OF EATIN' FAST FOOD IN THE HOLY CONFINES OF THE ALAMO LAST YEAR. SHE ESCAPED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF "THE POSSUM", A KNOWN CAT RUSTLER. BOTH ARE WANTED FOR SQUARE DANCIN' AFTER DARK WITH SMALL ANIMALS WITHOUT A PERMIT.

USPS DISTRICT 21 SPRING CONFERENCE
29 MARCH TO 1 APRIL 2007
AUSTIN, TEXAS

IT IS A CRIME NOT TO ATTEND BY DECREE OF
SHERIFF CHARLIE "DEAD EYE" STRONG



Anthony Luis Venegas	January 01
Jacqueline M. Judah	January 18
Vernon L. Helmke	January 21
Kenneth R. Summy	February 14
John B. Carey Jr.	February 20

2007 Calendar of Events

- 4 Jan — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 6 Jan - 17 Feb — Engine Maintenance Class continues , 10:00am - 2:00pm at *The Sportsman*, W Bus 77 in San Benito. 399-5123. Call Pete Pranis to sign up. Cost \$27.50
- 19-20 Jan — Incoming Officers Meeting , Hilton NASA Clear Lake. \$40 per person. Room Reservations 1-281-333-9300. Contact Karl Fernandez, District XO, if you plan to attend so he can get a meal count.
- 27 Jan — Annual Members Meeting, Election of Officers, and Past Commanders Dinner, 6:00pm at Howard Johnson's in Harlingen, corner of Expwy 83 & Stuart Place Rd. (Cost: \$11.00), Bring Your Own Adult Beverage of Choice. Mixers and Ice will be provided. Sodas available for \$0.50/can.
- 27 Jan — Orders taken for LRGV Power Squadron Logos. Orders will be taken at the Annual Meeting. \$10 for LRGV logo, \$5 for your name. Bring your own shirt, jacket, cap. Rule of thumb, the embroidered logo does not work well on t-shirts. Suggest polo or golf shirts, button down shirts, fishing shirts, caps or jackets for best results.
- 8 Feb — Boat Show Booth Set-Up , 12:00 noon, Meet at Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen.
- 8 Feb — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 9-11 Feb — All Valley Boat Show, Mercedes Texas
- 24 Feb - 17 Mar — Public Boating Course, Saturdays 9:00am-3:00pm, TSTC in Harlingen
- 24 Feb - 17 Mar — Seamanship Course , Saturdays 9:00am-3:00pm, TSTC in Harlingen
- 8 Mar — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 10 Mar — LRGV Change of Watch and Awards Banquet , 5:30pm Valley Greyhound Race Park, Harlingen. South Ed Carey Rd. (Estimated approx \$30.00 per person.) Dress: Uniform F, Blazer, or appropriate attire. Cash Bar, Live Greyhound Racing, we will have a personal teller for those who wish to try their luck.
- 17 Mar — Boating Course Graduation Party , Time and Location TBD.
- 12 Apr — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 10 May — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 14 Jun — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 12 Jul — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 9 Aug — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 13 Sep — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 11 Oct — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 8 Nov — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
- 13 Dec — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm



Winter Boating Course
Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

As usual, the Winter Boating Course will start 2 weeks after the Boat Show. Again this year, it will be on for consecutive Saturdays: 24 February, 3, 10 and 17 March at TSTC in Harlingen again this year.

Based on last year's experience we found:

1. Not one student who only took Boat Smart joined the Squadron.
2. About half of the Chart Smart class did join the Squadron.

More general considerations in favor of the Boating Course:

1. Boat Smart can be a place to baby-sit teenagers looking for their ticket to run jet skis or "felons" sent by JPs to get a course in "defensive boating".
2. The four week course is really distinct from the Texas Parks & Wildlife and Auxiliary's six hour rush jobs. Thus the Squadron Course enhances USPS's reputation as the place to go if you want to really learn nautical subjects and skills.
3. With GPS becoming almost universal, the need to understand basic navigation concepts has become more, not less important. A GPS novice is really lost if he doesn't know what the already too concise GPS instructions that come with the unit are talking about. Where else will novices get an instruction to basic navigation? Do you really think most folks will buy, let alone read the pertinent chapters in Chapman's? Having four weeks to absorb this material seems to work.



Seamanship
Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

The first advanced grades course is Seamanship. The current Seamanship course is a vast improvement upon previous editions. It can easily be taken as a home study course. Also, it can be very effectively taught in conjunction with the Squadron Boating Course this coming February/March. So...new members or those who've been in for a while, but have hesitated, "Why not take it now"? Cost \$20.00 total for both volumes.

New Assistant Squadron Education Officer!!!
Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

Gerardo (Jerry) Carrillo P has agreed to become the ASEO starting at the change of watch. But, Pete Pranis has been working with Jerry for some time on education projects. So, Pete will be trying to put him to work as soon as possible.

Jerry, Pete hopes you get as much satisfaction out of this work as he has. Welcome aboard!!!



Call for Annual Meeting & Recognition of Past Commanders

When: Saturday - 27 January 2007

6:00pm Hospitality

6:45pm Introduction of Past Commanders

7:00pm Mexican Dinner Buffet

7:45pm Annual Membership Meeting & Election of Officers



Where: Howard Johnson's Hotel
6779 W. Exwy 83
Harlingen, TX 78552
956-425-7070



Located at: Exwy 83 and Stuart Place Rd
On the South East corner just past the Frost Bank on the frontage road

Business: Election of Officers - P/C Christine G. Rakestraw, AP
Annual Financial Report - Lt/C John B. Carey, Jr., JN
Commanders Comments - P/C Christine G. Rakestraw, AP

PLEASE RSVP by Jan 23rd
Chris Rakestraw 956-245-7880
or D21PRO@aol.com
Kay Polt - KPolt@aol.com

Mexican Buffet: \$11.00 per person, gratuity included
Credit Cards or Cash (no checks)
You can bring your own adult beverage of choice, they will
have mixers and ice. Sodas charged at 50¢ each can.

Nominations 2007-08

Bridge

- **Commander**
Kathryn E. Polt, AP
- **Executive Officer**
Luis R. Venegas
- **Squadron Educational Officer**
Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP
- **Administrative Officer**
Gerardo Carrillo, P
- **Secretary**
Barbara Ketchum, S
- **Treasurer**
John B. Carey, Jr., JN
- **Asst SEO**
Gerardo Carrillo, P
- **Asst XO**
Joyce N. Armstrong, S

Members at Large

- Daniel Bauer
- Sid Rouch, S
- William A. Rutledge, AP
- Stuart D. Simpson, Jr., AP
- Jeri Wilhelmi, P
- Arthur Wilhelmi, AP

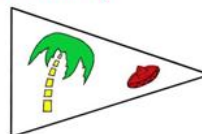
Audit Committee

- Janice Ciomperlik - Chair
- Jacqueline M. Judah, P
- James B. Palmquist, P

Additional nominations may be made by members, using the following procedure:
Five (5) or more members may jointly petition in writing to the Secretary for the addition of names to the ballot. The person(s) being nominated must agree to be nominated, and agree to serve if elected. The written petition must be received prior to the date of the Annual Meeting.

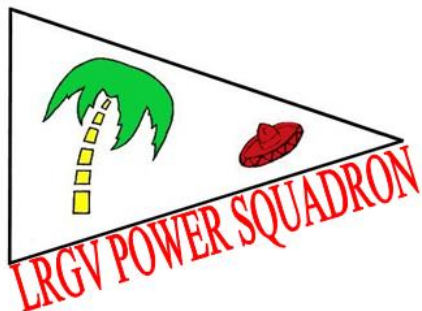
Nominating Committee

- Christine G. Rakestraw, AP - Chair
- Martha (Boo Boo) Lewis, P
- K.L. "Larry" Lewis, S



Respectfully submitted,
Christine G. Rakestraw, AP - Chair
Martha "BooBoo" Lewis, P
K.L. "Larry" Lewis, S

LRGV Power Squadron Logo Embroidered on Your Own Shirt



\$10 for the Logo
\$5 to add your Name

We decided to do this on your own shirt, so you know it will fit and you can spend what your budget can handle.

This is an embroidered logo, not screen printed. The lettering will be in contrasting color to the background of your shirt. Darker shirts will have the lettering in Yellow. Lighter Shirts will have it in Red.

Checks payable to *LRGV Power Squadron*
**Bring your shirts, caps, jackets etc to
the Annual Meeting on 27 January. We
will take the orders that day.**

If you cannot attend and want to place an order, please contact Jim Guffey,
Chris Rakestraw, or Joyce Armstrong to make arrangements.

Recommendations:

- Do not use a light-weight t-shirt because the embroidery does not work well on that material.
- Logo can be placed on most clothing such as Polo Shirts, Button Down Shirts, Fishing Shirts (Columbia or Magellan style), Shorts, Jackets, Caps, etc.
- Wash the shirt first, so it will not shrink after the logo has been added. If the shirt shrinks, the logo can pucker.

Mark Your Calendars...The Boat Show is Coming Soon!

Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

This year's All Valley Boat Show will run February 9th, 10th, and 11th. Three days, not four.

Set up will be Thursday, February 8th, starting at noon at Carey Sheet Metal. If you can't find anyone at Carey's go to the Mercedes Livestock Show Grounds. Find the booth or where it will be and sit tight (unless it is all set up).

We need all the help we can get at the boat show. It is our primary source of Boating Course sign ups and new members.

If you have some good pictures of the Squadron's activities, call Pete Pranis at 956-630-0648. We need to redo the photos on the Boat Show backdrop, fewer but much larger. Computer printing makes these enlargements economical. Again, call Pete if you have some.



U.S. COAST GUARD PRESS RELEASE

DATE: December 08, 2006 13:47:51 EST
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Office of Public Affairs – U.S. Coast Guard
Contact: Steve Blando

BOATERS MUST NOT OPERATE 121.5/243 MHZ EPIRBs AFTER 31 DECEMBER 2006

WASHINGTON - The Coast Guard reminds all boaters that beginning January 1, 2007, both 121.5 and 243 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) are prohibited from use in both commercial and recreational watercraft. Boaters wishing to have an emergency rescue beacon aboard their vessel must have a digital 406 MHz model. The January 1, 2007, date to stop using 121.5 MHz EPIRBs is in preparation for February 1, 2009, when satellite processing of distress signals from all 121.5/243 MHz beacons will terminate. Following this termination date, only the 406 MHz beacons will be detected by the International Cospas-Sarsat Satellite System which provides distress alert and location data for search and rescue operations around the world. The regulation applies to all Class A, B, and S 121.5/243 MHz EPIRBs. It does not affect 121.5/243 MHz man overboard devices which are designed to work directly with a base alerting unit only and not with the satellite system. This change, in large part, was brought about by the unreliability of the 121.5/243 MHz beacons in an emergency situation. Data reveals that with a 121.5 MHz beacon, only one

alert out of every 50 is a genuine distress situation. This has a significant effect on expending the limited resources of search and rescue personnel and platforms. With 406 MHz beacons, false alerts have been reduced significantly, and, when properly registered, can usually be resolved with a telephone call to the beacon owner. Consequently, real alerts can receive the attention they deserve. When a 406 MHz beacon signal is received, search and rescue personnel can retrieve information from a registration database. This includes the beacon owner's contact information, emergency contact information, and vessel/aircraft identifying characteristics. Having this information allows the Coast Guard, or other rescue personnel, to respond appropriately. In the U.S., users are required by law to directly register their beacon in the U.S. 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database at: <http://www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov/> or by calling 1-888-212-SAVE. Other users can register their beacon in their country's national beacon registration database or, if no national database is available, in the International Beacon Registration Database at <https://www.406registration.com/>. The United States Coast Guard is the lead agency for coordinating national maritime search and rescue policy and is responsible for providing search and rescue services on, under and over assigned international waters and waters subject to United States jurisdiction.





Remember in your Prayers

Josh Madden, son of Cdr Jerry and Cindy Madden, died recently doing service in Iraq. P/C Chris Rakestraw sent Josh's parents a letter stating that John would be thought about in prayer. They sent a reply message that said:

Dear P/C Rakestraw and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron

Thank you for your card concerning the death of our son Josh. He was doing a job nobody wants. He stated to me that he would rather fight them there than have to fight them at home. The only problem with that is that they are already here, waiting. He agreed but he hoped that this conflict in Iraq would buy us time to prepare. I don't know. He never complained, just did his job and did it right. He called the younger soldiers under him "his children". He knew it was his job to train and protect them. Yet he was the one who needed protection. May the sacrifice of all our soldiers mean something one day. Pray for our soldiers, stay behind them and never forget.

Sincerely,

Cdr. Jerry and Cindy Madden, Shreveport Power Squadron



Chili Cookoff
Galveston Bay Power Squadron
Hosting

Where: LAKE NASSAU PARK
 When: Saturday; 3 February, 2007
 Time: Park is reserved from 0700 till 1800
 Cooking is expected to start around 0900 and
 Judging will be at 1300
 Cost: \$ 3.00 per person
 Trophies:

- 1) Grand Champion
- 2) Reserve Grand Champion (Second Place)
- 3) Friendliest Team
- 4) Best theme or booth decoration, team costumes, etc.
- 5) Most Ingredients
- 6) Best Team Spirit
- 7) Chunkiest Chili
- 8) Best Munchies
- 9) Hottest Chili
- 10) First Consolation Prize

II. CHILI COOKOFF RULES. These are similar to other cook-off events in the area

- 1) All chili must be cooked on the site.
- 2) No beans may be used in the chili. They can be offered as a side dish.
- 3) Alcohol is permitted at this facility, but glass containers are prohibited.

Contact Kenn Manning at (281) 731-2285 or kmanning2@houston.rr.com for additional details



Squadron Education Watch
Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

The Engine Maintenance Course is up and running, but you can still join the class. Classes are held Saturdays, 1000 to 1400 at The Sportsman, 1985 West Highway 77 in San Benito. Phone 956-399-5123. Exit Expressway 77 at Los Indios Bridge exit...but go north, not south,

until you hit Highway 77. Go East on Highway 77 (a right if coming from the south) and continue about a quarter mile. The Sportsman is on the south side of 77. You can't miss it. West side of the building has a big "Sportsman" sign on it.

Classes will continue each Saturday through 17 February, longer if needed. Cost is \$27.50. If you want to take it, call Stu Simpson at 956-943-6838.

Note: Course is a combination self study and class room/shop work. It will not make a mechanic out of you, but will teach first eschelon maintenance and what to look for so you can go to a mechanic before you wreck your engine.

The Annual Public Boating Course will again be held at Texas State Technical College in Harlingen. Class dates are 24 February and 2, 10, and 17 March if needed. Note, the course is four Saturdays long.

We need proctors and instructors for the course. There is no better way to learn a subject really well than to teach it. Start as a proctor and then move up to instructor as your confidence level grows.

Note: The national Power Squadron has stopped supplying "Char Smart", they've run out of copies and will not replenish the stock. Similarly, they will stop supplying "Boat Smart" as soon as existing supplies are exhausted. The reason is the cost of carrying three sets of books when the Squadron Boating Course text has all the material in the other two. Instead, squadrons will be given guides to which chapters they need to teach from the Squadron Boating Course text for a "Boat Smart" and a "Char Smart" course.

Last year we tried a "Boat Smart" course followed by a "Chart Smart" course. The overall reaction from students was negative. Students who took one or both courses had the same reaction—they wished they had more time to digest the material!!! They felt that a four day course would do the trick.

Secondly, all the new members we got came from those who took both courses.

So, from all of the above, we'll go back to the scheme Keith Shantz, AP pioneered.

Seamanship will be taught in conjunction with the Boating Course again this year. There are some areas of common course work where both classes can be combined.

This gives us two benefits. First, we save on the number of instructor sessions taught. Secondly, the interaction of members taking Seamanship with Boating Course students is a real boost to recruiting new members, especially during lunch.

Cost of Seamanship: \$20.00 total!!!

For Squadron members who haven't taken Seamanship, this is a great chance to take it quickly and get started on the Squadron's Educational "Advanced Grades" path. If you are interested, or want to learn more, call Pete Pranis at 956-630-0648. Talk it over with him.

Again, congratulations to our members who were awarded the "Educational Proficiency Award" by passing Seamanship, Piloting, and Advanced Piloting as well as any three electives: Chris Rakestraw AP; Bill Rutledge AP; Keith Shantz AP; and Stuart Simpson AP. Dennis Sheehan AP and Cdr Kay Polt AP also passed Advanced Piloting. We salute you!!!

The Squadron has a New Storage Shed!!!
Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

The Squadron has a new Property Shed to replace the modular home unit we were using until it got wrecked in a heck of a wind storm the night of 28-29 April 2006.

While the old shed was 10 feet by 30 feet (10'x30') the new shed is 10'x20' but sits on the modular unit's significantly rebuilt base deck. There are a lot of differences between the "old shed" and our new one. But before anything could be done, the existing base deck had to be repaired. This was done not only by Squadron members but by Lt/C John Carey, Jr. JN and members of his family. This combined effort saved us quite a bit of money.

The "new shed" was designed from the start as the Squadron Property Shed. This led to the following.

1. The smaller size. Based on our use of the modular unit, our temporary use of Honny's real truck trailer and the questionable condition of the base deck's east end plus total cost led us to conclude that 10'x20' was a good size for us.

2. Shed not house trailer construction. We didn't need to "overbuild".

3. Translucent roof panels for light instead of windows. This change gives us a lot more daylight. The shed's builder, the folks in front of Carey Sheet Metal who build and sell sheds as a business, said after seeing our completed shed that he's going to recommend translucent roof panels to all his customers.

After the shed was built, the builder recom-

mended trailer “tie down straps” secured by helix anchors. The straps going around the trailer make it a lot more “storm proof”. This should significantly lessen the chances of another wind storm from knocking down/blowing over the shed.

Finally, after the shed was completed, LtC John Carey Jr. JN and his family came to the rescue again by:

1. Carpeting the shed with carpet J.D., John’s son pulled out of his bedrooms. The carpet gives the shed a “real homey feel”.

2. J.D. also gave us heavy metal shelving he salvaged from a Lowes that was changing locations in Harlingen. This shelving is deep enough with enough space between shelves to be our dream come true for shelving.

Thank you Johnny, J.D. and all who pitched in on the shed project, whether the initial clean up, base rebuild, or other. But really special thanks to Lt/C John Carey, Jr. JN and his family for ramrodding the job.

What’s that? What’s that? How much did the new shed cost?

The new shed was originally budgeted for \$2495.00. The final cost came in at \$3,218.05 plus volunteer labor and contributions. The cost increases came from the base deck repair (\$150), translucent roof panels instead of windows (\$130), and anchoring anchors and straps (\$150). The carpet and shelving were at no cost thanks to the Careys !!!

Now we need to have a short work party to move the Squadron’s stuff into the shed from Johnny’s trailer and get a combination lock for the door.

A Review of our Boat Launching Ramps Luis Venegas

Well, another year went by fast. We are starting a new year with the hope that boating safety will continue to be our priority. I have taken some time and visited some of the public and non-public ramps. I have compiled some of the details, comments, and recommendations pertaining to the ramps in the graph below for your safety and benefit. Ramps were evaluated on how user friendly they are, which includes assistance, traffic, parking, and waiting period, how well maintained they are which includes pier quality, condition, stability, wood condition, etc., and how many hazardous materials (eg. Oysters, nails, rocks) were in the ramp. Please use your own judgment when using these ramps. It will save you money and prevent accidents. Have a happy and safe new year!

Ramp	User-Friendly	Maintained	Hazards
	Poor—Great	Poor—Great	Poor—Great
Hwy 48 just past Amphels	1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5	<u>1</u> 2 3 4 5	1 <u>2</u> 3 4 5
Arroyo Public Parks	1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5	1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5	1 2 3 4 <u>5</u>
Long Island Village	1 2 3 4 <u>5</u>	1 2 3 4 <u>5</u>	1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5
Port Isabel Fingers	1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5	1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5	1 <u>2</u> 3 4 5
Dollar Ramp Port Isabel	1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5	1 <u>2</u> 3 4 5	<u>1</u> 2 3 4 5
Jim’s Pier	1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5	1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5	1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5
Parrot Eyes Restaurant	1 2 3 4 <u>5</u>	1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5	1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5





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