

May/June/July 2007

RESACA ECHO

**The Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron
Sail and Power Boating News
Volume 34 Number 3
A Unit of the United States Power Squadrons®
District 21**



**A View from the Bridge
By Cdr Kay Polt, AP**

First of all, let me say WELCOME to our newest members, Santos C. Ponce from Brownsville, and E. Karleen (Boo) Ewing from Harlingen. It is great to have you joining our group.

It is great being home. My six month tour of China is complete and I am not going back, at least for now. Who knows what the next job will bring. However, I now have enough airline miles and hotel points to actually take a “free” two-week vacation over there. Free except for the food and the shopping and the taxis. I would like to go back and just travel around and play tourist. There are so many things I didn’t get to see in the time I was over there working.

The heat of a hot dry summer seems to have moved north a little bit. I hear Colorado has been hitting 105°F lately, and all the fires out west are causing quite a lot of serious damage. Down here we seem to be in the rainy season. It sure is nice to see everything green and growing. But as we all know, too much of a good thing isn’t good. We do have some worries about flooding, and the mosquitoes are quite lively now. Everything in moderation. (Well, except for ice cream and cookies.)

We are having a great summer season in the LRGV Power Squadron. Please join us the weekend of 27-28 July for the Coop Charting event. We need to show the district that we are indeed a great location for events. In the past, this squadron has done a bang-up job, and I have no worries for the future. We are a great group of people will once again make our visitors feel at home and everyone will have a fabulous time.

In May we held an event for Safe Boating Week that was an experiment for us – selling bottled water and delivering a safe boating message at the Sam’s club parking lot in McAllen. This event was semi-successful, and we learned a lot of new things that we will incorporate into later events to make them even more successful in the future.

In June it was great seeing so many of you at our dinner meeting in Harlingen. I had a great time showing you the pictures of the China International Boat Show that I attended. It is amazing that no matter how different it is, so many things are also the same.

Our August event promises to be a great blast. Members Bob and Boo Ewing bought this brand new shiny cabin cruiser and are going to give rides from Port Isabel to Arroyo City on Saturday August 11th. Then on Sunday they will give more rides from Arroyo City back to Port Isabel. On Saturday night we will have a grand party in Arroyo City. Come by land or by water or by the Ewing's cabin cruiser... This promises to be one of those fun events that we will talk about in years to come... "Remember the great time we had that weekend in 2007 when we all went to Arroyo City..." More details will be coming out soon. Stay tuned.

And lastly I would like to thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a great free gift of Spanish Language Coloring Books on Water Safety. We have ordered about 1200 coloring books, and will be setting up events to use these as an enticement for people with children to hear our safe boating message. Other squadrons have found that a great target demographic is mothers with children, because they want to make sure the family is safe on the water. By using the free coloring books, say at an HEB or Wal-mart parking lot, we can get them to stop by our tent and talk a little about water and boating safety and our organization. We anticipate doing something before the All-Valley Boat Show in February, in order to also sign up families to take our Safe Boating Class. We can also hand out free coloring books at the boat show, as an added incentive for families to get involved in boating safety.

Resaca Echo
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A Note from your LRGV Safety Officer: Lt Orren Ketchum, S

How safe is your boat, do yourself a favor and do an inventory of your boat, and save yourself grief later. Happy Boating!!



Editor's Note
Anthony Luis Venegas

Happy Summer, everybody! I hope you have been enjoying your summer! It's a great time for boating, but be sure to bring water and bug spray. I hope you all enjoyed your Independence Day!

For those of you who went to the Parade, you probably saw the USPS Parade Boat! Orren and Barbara Ketchum, Peter Pranis, my family and I went on the boat. The heat was the worst, but there was a breeze, and we had a canopy for the boat that we used for shade. It was a lot of fun! There were a lot more people in the parade this year. Hopefully the parade will continue to grow!

A special thanks goes out to Bill Gagan from Cougar Marine for his generous donation of \$300 to the Squadron Newsletter. Thanks, Bill!

Not much else to say except that I hope you enjoy this issue of the Resaca Echo! Have a great summer!



Spoil Bank Revegetation Update
Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

On 13 January 2007 Eloy Garcia, the Boy Scout Eagle Scout candidate, Bill Stocker, S. Stuart Simpson AP, Rod Summy AP, Pete Pranis AP, Bill Bieker, Luis Venegas and Tony Venegas checked the Lower Laguna Madre spoil bank black mangrove plantings Eloy did with Squadron help on 29 September 2006.

For the seedlings planted, 26.8 percent were still growing. Of the approximately 200 black mangrove "seeds" planted on the fly at the same time, about 10 percent were still growing. We believe that this is the best success rate for any black mangrove plantings in the area. All the Bahia Grande black mangrove seedlings died! There were thousands of them!

In coming back to the same spoil banks after four months everyone was struck with the sight of the spoil banks severe erosion from high water and wave action since our last visit. Consequently, any shoreline plantings we do will have to use well established seedlings. That is, both fairly large and well acclimated to salt water.

Miss Yazmin Morato of McAllen, at Pete Pranis's request, is growing some black mangrove seedlings similar to those Bill Bieker grew last year. So far she has learned:

- * The seedlings almost need to be swimming in water in their pots.
- * "Miracle Grow", in fairly heavy doses, does work on the seeds.
- * There can be too much sun.
- * The seedlings seem to grow a lot slower than expected.

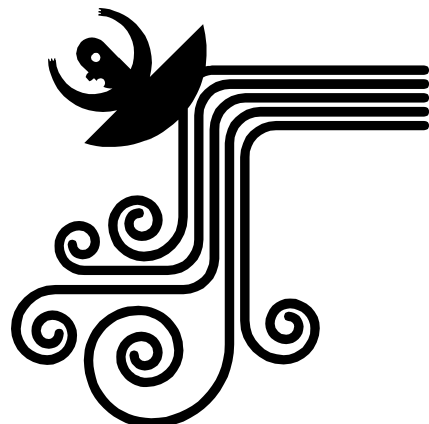
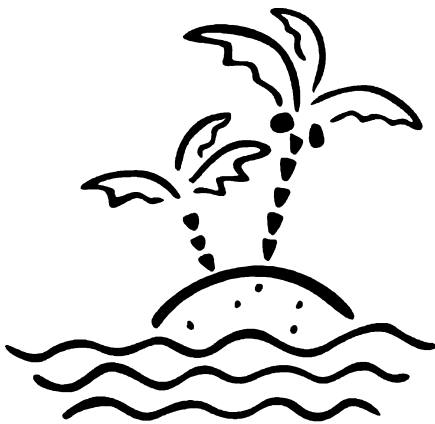
Eloy Garcia will be awarded his Eagle Scout badge sometime in July at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in McAllen. Squadron members will be invited to attend. Note: Only about 3 percent of Boy Scouts become Eagle Scouts, Scouting's highest rank.

Also, we have our next Eagle Scout candidate, Mr. Duncan Rankin. Duncan will be a freshman this fall at McAllen High School. Bill Stocker, Rod Summy, Bill Bieker, and Pete Pranis have met with Duncan. He is enthusiastic and willing to take a long time; i.e. one plus years to really do a good job on this project.

If you want to get involved, call Bill Stocker. The next "expedition" to the spoil banks will be around the end of September. At that time Duncan will be making his first foray to the spoil banks, leading his fellow scouts to collect black mangrove seeds and make a preliminary

reconnaissance of the banks to establish a baseline for his project. The Squadron will need shallow draft boats to haul Scouts and people to help with GPS locating and general observation. Call Bill Stocker!!

Finally, Rod Summy reports that there is a lot of academic and “official” interest in the project both in Texas and nationally. The interest stems in part from the devastation hurricanes Katrina and Rita wreaked on Gulf Coast wet lands and barrier islands. Folks are beginning to take the issue of vegetation/revegetation of those areas seriously. Effective vegetation belts could be the most cost effective way to protect these barriers from wave action and sea surges associated with major storms, hence adding to the protection of shoreline communities, industries, and marine installations. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron could well be pioneering a project that will last at least decades and have national if not international impacts. This is seriously not an exaggeration!!



Life Jacket Safety Tip for Kids
Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

This Safe Boating Week, the Squadron had a tent “booth” at Sam’s Club in McAllen. Gerry Carillo, P, Chris Rakestraw, AP, and Pete Pranis, AP managed the booth from 0800 to 1500, when they took everything down just before a real downpour.

Normally the booth’s purpose is to give information to passer-bys. This year, we learned a real lesson from a grandfather fisherman. His story is as follows.

Grandpa was fishing off the east coast of Florida in the channel just at the landward end of the jetties. Grandpa had his four year old granddaughter along to keep him and his crew company. In keeping with safety practices she was wearing a child’s life jacket. But, the life jacket was a child’s off shore Type I life jacket. The Type I probably saved her life.

While fishing, Grandpa heard a splash. Granddaughter fell overboard! The tide was at full ebb so she was rapidly going out to sea!

Grandpa was a strong swimmer, so he jumped overboard to rescue his granddaughter. With the current he was about 100-150 yards from his boat before he caught up with her. After he grabbed her, they made their way to the jetties to wait to be picked up by his boat.

Now the key point is that while granddaughter was overboard and drifting, the Type I life jacket kept her head above water. Otherwise she would have drowned or come pretty close to it! So, don’t use cute Type II or III jackets for little ones. Put them in Type I offshore life jackets. They might not be “cute”, but they are the best insurance there is that they will be able to talk about their experiences falling overboard.

The following is an Interim Report prepared by the Committee on Rules

MAY 2007 INTERIM REPORT TO THE GOVERNING BOARD
IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2007 MID-YEAR MEETING

We are presenting an interim report to keep everyone informed about progress on the Governance Proposal. A change in governance is an important question --- perhaps the most important issue in years. We are committed to an open process, with time for all of you to think about the changes and discuss them with your members.

At the 2007 Annual Meeting, everyone was told that the Norfolk Governing Board would vote on a motion to have this committee draft amendments. The amendments would come to a vote at the 2008 Annual Meeting in Dallas. The Committee on Rules started outlining the changes that might be needed and hoped to have a first draft ready for discussion in Norfolk. We found that the original schedule wasn't going to work.

One of the major changes involves the elections of USPS national officers. Our current Bylaws call for two rounds of elections:

- The Annual Meeting (Governing Board and squadron delegates) elects the national Bridge, the general committees, and the general members of the Governing Board. After the Annual Meeting adjourns, the Governing Board meets to elect the rear commanders, staff commanders, and members of the standing committees. The Governance Proposal would add the squadron delegates to the Governing Board and combine all of the winter sessions into a single meeting. The combined meeting would elect all of the national positions and designate some of those positions to serve in a second capacity as members of the Board of Directors.

That's the problem. If the bylaws amendments are decided at an Annual Meeting, it would be very hard to implement the changes at the same meeting. Who should receive notice of the meeting and the candidate slates? Who may vote? Should the annual meeting adjourn and reconvene immediately as a Governing Board meeting? Regardless of how you plan to vote, we think everyone can support an orderly transition.

This leaves two choices:

- The Norfolk Governing Board could amend the bylaws effective upon the convening of the first Governing Board meeting in 2008. This would allow the existing Governing Board to finish the work of the meeting, with the "new" Governing Board taking over at Dallas. The Committee on Nominations would present a unified slate of candidates for election at the 2008 Governing Board Meeting/Annual Meeting.
- The Governing Board could continue with the current plan ---- approve the concept in principle and direct the Committee on Rules to prepare amendments for a vote at the 2008 Annual Meeting. The amendments would take effect at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

The Committee on Rules believed that the first option was the better choice. If USPS agrees that change is needed, then it is needed sooner rather than later. We moved up our schedule and started detailed work so a draft could go out as soon as possible. We are ready to release that draft.

Our approach has been simple: if a bylaws change was needed to carry out the intent of the Governance Proposal, we wrote it. If the duties in a particular section were being re-assigned, we moved the section. If a section wasn't involved in the Governance Proposal, we left it alone (except for renumbering of sections).

We made one change to the duties of this committee. The current bylaws allow us to charter new squadrons except for the 60 day period before a Governing Board meeting. We have proposed eliminating the blackout period. This would allow Governing Board participation by the commander and delegates from the new squadron.

One area remains open. Our bylaws provide for temporary replacement of officers if they are incapacitated or unavailable. The interim officer steps aside when the principal officer is able to continue. This may not work for the Board of Directors because of certain provisions in North Carolina law. Our current draft calls for the interim officers to carry out the duties of the office except for serving on the Board of Directors. We are looking at two possibilities:

- Electing the assistants to the educational officer, secretary, and treasurer as alternate members of the Board

Allowing the Board of Directors to designate a replacement, just as the Operating Committee does today. The replacement would continue in office until the next Governing Board meeting, at which time the Governing Board would fill the vacancy.

Respectfully,

R/C Allan W. Lakin, SN, Chairman
 Stf/C William I. Neef, SN, Assistant Chairman
 P/R/C Daniel Stein, SN
 P/D/C Artemas M. Pickard, SN
 R/C Robert Schloeman, JN
 P/R/C Gene R. Van Rhee, SN
 P/R/C Lowell G. (Lew) Ward, SN



2007 Calendar of Events

12 Jul — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
27-28 Jul — **D21 Nautical Coop Charting Event, Hosted by LRGV**, Port Isabel, TX & Arroyo City. Training Class 6:00-7:00pm Friday night at Ramada Limited in Harlingen, corner of Ed Carey and Expressway 77/83. Port Isabel group, meet Saturday morning at the dock of P/C Boo Boo and Larry Lewis, 168 Windward in Port Isabel. Dinner Saturday night at Longhorn BBQ in SanBenito.
9 Aug — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
11-12 Aug — **Cruise to Arroyo City, hosted by members Bob and Boo Ewing**. On Saturday, cruise from Port Isabel to Arroyo City, riding in the lap of luxury aboard the Ewing's brand new shiny cabin cruiser. Dinner and party Saturday night in Arroyo City (location to be announced). Cruise Sunday from Arroyo City to Port Isabel. Seating is limited aboard the boat to 8-10 riders each way. Come by land, by water, or ride with the Ewings. The fun event of the season! Even if you don't cruise up, please join the party Saturday night. If you want to bring your own boat, dock space is available.
13 Sep — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
11 Oct — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
25 - 29 Oct — **D21 Fall Conference**, Hosted by Shreveport Power Squadron. Cruise to Cozumel, leaving from Galveston.
8 Nov — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm
13 Dec — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm



Janice Ciomperlik	July 04
Russell J. Judah	July 06
Christine G. Rakestraw	July 08
Stanley T. Ciomperlik	July 24
M. E. Dodson	August 07
Kasey Lewis	August 15
David Joseph Ivory	August 26
Kyle Wagener	August 28
George Rivas	September 01
Barbara J. Ketchum	September 06
Gary Stephen Sollner	September 08
John Pinkerman	September 13

Enjoy Your Day in the Water

Luis R. Venegas

How do you enjoy your days in the water, if you had to rate it? We asked several friends to rate their days in a range of 1 to 10, 1 being the worst and 10 being the best. We found that most of them rate their days depending on the amount of fish caught rather than the joy of boating. Some of them demonstrated frustration arising from those unlucky days. Some of them rated their days according to the overall experience.

One of my friends told me a story. He happened to be an owner of a charter boat. During one of his trips when fishing on a beautiful day and despite of attempting to fish in several known areas, the catch was not good. Most of the people on the boat grew impatient. To further aggravate the situation, he started to have engine problems until his engine finally quit working. The drift took them to shallow waters until they hit a sandbar. He called one of his friends for assistance. It took several hours for the friend could reach him and help him. During the waiting period, to the surprise of his customers, a school of Reds happened to be passing by the boat in the shallow water. Everyone began to catch fish to the point that their bag was filled and the joy was to the point that they forgot completely about the boat problems. They had the time of their life! Finally help arrived and they went back to port with overall satisfaction.

After listening to this story, along with several others, in my opinion the best way to enjoy your trip, and every day of your life, is to 1) thank God for another day, being able to see the sun rise, hear the birds sing, and enjoy the ocean and all God's creations, 2) share those things with friends and family, 3) get to meet new people and break from daily routine, and 4) return home with the memory of the trip, which will be different every day even if the trip is to work, fish, boat, or simply to sit by the bay, listen to the waves, and let time pass by.

Also, remember that part of this enjoyment starts with how you treat your peers, and it is important to remember and follow water etiquette. Have respect for people on launching ramps by using ramps quickly to let others launch, render help to people launching or docking, keep from getting angry, be patient with inexperienced boaters, and also be ready to learn something or teach something, because after all that is what USPS is all about. Have respect for waders. Two minutes to idle safety past waders and boaters is not too much to ask. Treat waders like pedestrians on the street. Also watch for kayaks and other man-powered boats. Remember, if you are under power, you are always the give-way boat.

Remember, life is short. A hello and a smile is worth a million. What you can take home, that experience, that adventure, will change your life forever. Have a happy summer!



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FRIDAY, SEPT 21

CHECK-IN	1400 – TILL
HOSPITALITY ROOM (SIGN UP YOUR BOAT)	1500 – 2300
GROUP DINNER AT “OFF THE HOOK”	1830

SATURDAY, SEPT 22

BREAKFAST (Hawthorn Room)	0700 – 0800
CAPTAIN’S MEETING (Hospitality Room)	0800 – 0900
SEARCH & RECOVER	0900 – 1500
HOSPITALITY ROOM (SUBMIT REPORTS)	1500 – 1830
DINNER TBD	1900 – TILL

SUNDAY, SEPT 23

DEPARTURE

**CBSPS Contacts: Chuck West - 361-441-4077 - email: ribbit@frogmans.com
John and Jackie Gaskins - 361-992-1756 - email: johngaskins@grandecom.net**

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SQUADRONS**



Probable National Dues Change

Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

In the face of mounting financial difficulties at the national USPS headquarters, the great thinkers of the national bridge decided to collapse twelve (12) separate dues categories into three (3)! There seems to be four reasons for this: 1. Working with twelve dues categories is beyond the mental capabilities of the headquarters staff; 2. To save money that the national bridge severely cut back on staff, reducing the number of categories will let staff process more forms in the same amount of time; 3. It is a sneaky way to get a few more nickels and dimes out of the membership; and 4. It might be a way to increase total membership numbers. Probably all four reasons came into play in making this decision.

The new dues structure will be:

- 1. Active (without family/one member only).....\$33.60
- 2. Active(with family/two or more total members in all categories).....\$50.40
This category is 1.5 times the active member charge.
- 3. Apprentice...stays the same.....\$12.00

Note: if one member is a life or sustaining member who isn't charged now, with or without family, in the new structure if the member has family, the family member(s) must pay \$16.80 for the whole log who aren't life or sustaining members for a total cost of \$16.80 instead of zero as now.

For a single active member or a couple (active and additional active) there is no change in dues.

Adult family members (old charge \$8.40) and Junior family members (old charge \$2.00 each) now get rolled into active with family for a total blanket charge of \$50.40, no matter how many additional active, adult family and junior family members there are.

Given the flat \$16.80 increase for one to an infinitely large number of additional members in a family there will be no real incentive for families to list additional members as anything but additional active or junior family members for those under 18 years old.

For our squadron we have six families with one or more family members (adult old charge \$8.40 each, junior old charge \$2.00 each) who will be hit with a dues increase from \$8.40 to \$14.60. One family with two additional actives will save \$16.80.

Everybody else (28 one or two actives) will stay the same.

As I see it, at best, the change might encourage families with children to bring everybody on board for "free". Hence membership might increase. At worst, it is rearranging the Titanic's deck chairs. In either case, the total change in costs for any family is no worse than the price of a couple of deluxe "Whataburger" "Whatameals". In the broad scheme of things, this is not much to get upset over, except that in principle some families will be screwed out of a few bucks. It always smarts when you are the screwie instead of the screwer. I'm afraid that the amounts are individually small enough so that no one will be able to get a crusade going. Note: this is the same principle special interests in Washington use. If they can get a dollar or two out of every taxpayer, the special interest can collect several hundred millions of dollars, but the individual taxpayer only suffers a little bit, a "mordida". So why fight it? The problem is that if you add up all the "little bits" you have a hemorrhage!

Consequently, we should be very upset over the gross mismanagement of the national's finances by a succession of the national bridges. This is something to raise hell about at District and National conferences/meetings!! That is, if you want to spend the money to go to these pow wows where you will probably be the odd man out. Again, the law of special interests wins again. The national USPS didn't get in this mess over night and it won't get out of it over night either. And then there is Washington...Ahhhhhhh!!!

High School Heroes Teens Save Three

An excerpt from August 2007 issue of *Motorboating* magazine, pg. 26

Sixteen students from the Riviera Beach Maritime Academy were cruising towards Key West on a 10-day training mission aboard a 137-foot schooner when they became central figures in a heroic rescue operation. When high school sophomore T.J. Quails spotted signal flares in the evening sky, he alerted his ship's captain, who notified the Coast Guard and then directed the ship toward a fishing boat with three men aboard that was sinking 10 miles off the coast. The students helped lower First Mate Scott Hooper into the water. Braving seven-foot seas, Hooper brought two men back to the schooner; the third man swam to the ship on his own. To recognize the heroic efforts of the young heroes, the local Power Squadron presented Academy President Gidget Greco with a special award.

Something you might need to know:

The Coastal Conservation Association's newsletter, *Currents*, had an article briefly explaining new regulations passed by Texas Parks & Wildlife regarding the protection of seagrass. A "comprehensive discussion" of these regulations can be found at:

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/faq/fishboat/fish/index.phtml#seagrass>

It would be wise to take a look at this website so you know what not to do and what the consequences can be.



Education Report Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

Engine Maintenance: By the time you get this issue of the "Echo" everyone should have taken all the exams for Engine Maintenance. The next issue will have the final run down on all who passed.

In the meantime, a heart felt thanks to Rob Youker and the Sportsman in San Benito for the use of his place for the Saturday classes. Maintenance manager "Junior" Pena gave us a number of memorable "hands on" sessions, many using boats/engines right on the Sportsman's showroom floor. Again, thank you for your hospitality and sharing your expertise with us.

Seamanship: The new 2007 Seamanship course is out. We've gotten copies. It has two parts. The first is the regular eight section Seamanship course. It comes in one module, not two. In a lot of ways it reminds me of the old Seamanship manual, but it has some major changes. The graphics (in color) are outstanding. Second, the sections are really functionally related to a typical cruise; i.e. the section headings are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Before You Go | 5. Rules of the Road |
| 2. The Boat | 6. Anchoring, Mooring, and Rafting |
| 3. Slow Speed Maneuvering | 7. Emergencies on the Water |
| 4. Handling at Sea | 8. Marlinspike |

Section 5, “Rules of the Road”, refers the student to a second book, “The One Minute Guide to the Nautical Rules of the Road”, which is part of the student package. While the student manual has 174 pages, “The One Minute guide” has another 157 pages. “The One Minute Guide’s” purpose is to present “The International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea”, the “COLREGS”, in a format that is more readily digestible by recreational boaters as well as for professionals. So, Seamanship students get a heavy dose of Rules of the Road.

I asked Keith Shantz AP to give me an unvarnished opinion of “One Minute”. He really likes it. Again, great graphics and a text both for admiralty lawyers and seamen. That is “What it means” sections following COLREGS sections. It really is pretty good.

The Squadron has about 22 members who haven’t taken Seamanship. The benefits of this course are that it focuses on operating a boat, not much on government regs, except Rules of the Road, and no navigation! So, it is like peeling an onion, the more you study the more you get to the heart of things.

In talking it over with Marty Glore as to how best to teach Seamanship, he pointed out the very real value of classes. The face to face interaction adds a lot to the course. The text can’t cover everything so “war stories” really do make a difference. I agree. However, if anyone wants to do it as a home study to get a jump on folks give me a call. It can be done, especially if you study it along side the pertinent sections of “Chapman’s”.

Right now I need feedback from Squadron members on when, where, and how long the course should be. For example, three Saturdays for the material followed by a fourth for the test might work. When?? In the Fall?? During the Boating Course?? After Christmas, but before the Boating Course (late February-March)?? Please give Pete Pranis feedback at 956-630-0648. All ideas will be taken seriously.

Two final points:

There is an appendix for operating in Mexican waters. This section should be read with the Cruise Planning text by your side for some perspective.

Lastly, marlinspike knots covered are:

- * figure eight
- * clove hitch
- * bowline
- * cleat hitch
- * sheet bend
- * anchor bend
- * reef knot
- * round turn and two half hitches



Piloting: Once we have had a Seamanship class, then it will be time for another Piloting Course! We will still be facing using magnetic headings on charts, but the Squadron needs to get a resolution to District 21 for National to get rid of this insanity!! Your thoughts on how to do this??

Have fun on the water this summer!!

Message from USPS Environmental Department:

Earlier this year we passed on the USPS position statement regarding the EPA decision to implement Clean Water Act discharge permitting for all vessels from outboards to cargo ships (reprinted below FYI). Copied here is more information from BoatU.S. on the progress made to date. It would be terrific if you could pass this along to your members and ask them all to contact their reps:

For 34 years the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has exempted discharges from recreational boats from the Clean Water Act permit system. Regretfully, a recent court ruling cancelled this permit exemption. EPA is required by the court decision to develop and implement by September 30, 2008 a national permit system for ALL vessels in the United States for a variety of normal operational discharges.

We have been working behind the scenes with other boating organizations to get the exemption reinstated for recreational boats. Fortunately, the Recreational Boating Act of 2007 (H.R. 2550) has been introduced by Representatives Gene Taylor (D-Miss) and Candice Miller (R-Mich) which would protect recreational boats from being swept into this unnecessary and expensive permitting system.

It is critically important that H.R. 2550 be passed and your support is essential. Please contact your Congressman and Senators TODAY and ask that they co-sponsor or support H.R. 2550.

If the permit system becomes a reality, you will be required to pay for a state permit for each of your boats. EPA will be monitoring your deck runoff, grey water, bilge water, engine cooling water, and the use of copper bottom paints.

The original lawsuit that led to this court decision sought to address ballast water discharges from large ocean-going ships, which can introduce damaging aquatic invasive species into U.S. waters. Keeping our waterways clean and preventing the spread of invasive species is of utmost importance to the future of boating. But taking a complex permitting system designed for industrial dischargers and applying it to recreational boats will not yield significant environmental benefits and it will come at a very high cost. Requiring recreational boaters to purchase a permit would not prevent the spread of invasive species.

BoatUS has been a leader in educating boaters about Clean Boating practices for more than a decade. Our nonprofit Foundation has funded local education projects on invasive species prevention, helped develop voluntary Clean Marina programs, and authored much of the country's Clean Boating outreach. These positive education efforts are making a difference.

Please ask your elected federal representatives to support H.R. 2550. It is common-sense legislation. As you send your emails to your Members of Congress, please copy BoatUS at GovtAffairs@BoatUS.com. We'd also like to ask you to send a copy of your correspondence to the EPA, so they can see how this will affect citizens. However, please know that if you choose to send it to EPA, it will become a part of the public record. EPA's email is ow-docket@epa.gov, and your email needs to have a subject line with Docket ID No. OW-2007-0483.

USPS Position Statement regarding the Water Ballast Issue

Federal courts have directed the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) decision to implement across-the-board Clean Water Act (CWA) provisions and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting for all vessels from outboards to cargo ships.

United States Power Squadrons (USPS) opposes a blanket characterization of all vessels and urges the federal government to exercise restraint and reason by exempting small recreational watercraft from NPDES permits not currently required of vessels regulated by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Our organization recommends implementing a national, environmentally responsible program of manufacture and operation standards for recreational vessels without the need for individual permitting. USPS further recommends that such a program include development of best management practices for key environmental concerns from recreational watercraft: grey, black and bilge water, as well as engine cooling water and exhaust.

Adopted practices would include such considerations as fuel tank venting and recovery systems, black water holding tanks, and non-discharge of grey water in confined anchorages. In addition, bilges should have oil and water separators ranging from absorbent pads to mechanical devices.

The fragility of our environment is a major concern to all of us, on land and sea. USPS urges a sensible approach in determining environmental regulations that protect our environs but are reasonably imposed based on a vessel's size and use so as to preserve the public's right to enjoy more than 18 million boats for recreational purposes.

Approved by the
USPS Operating Committee
13 April 2007

2007 China International Boat Show

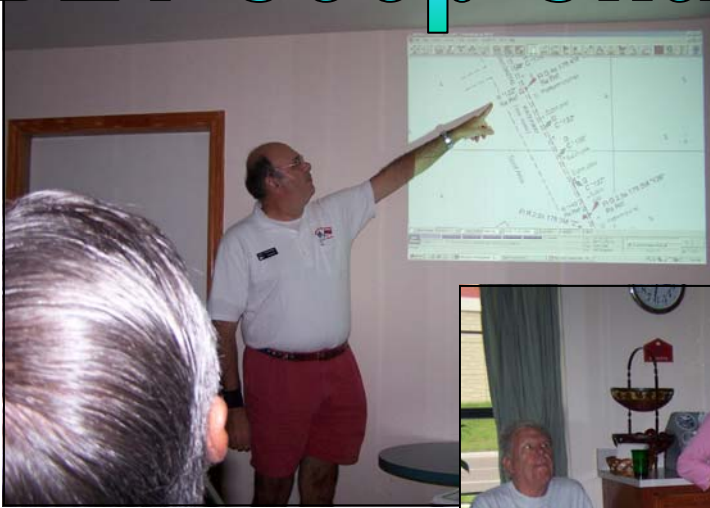


The largest boat show in Asia. Held at the Shanghai Exhibition Hall. An elegant building in the heart of Shanghai, built in Russian style.





D21 Coop Charting Event



D/C Karl Fernandes and P/C Dick Snapp from Houston gave an informative seminar on how to properly collect data.



Members from Houston, Dallas, Galveston Bay, Beaumont, Austin, and LRGV participated.



New member Santos Ponce at the helm, working with teammates Sid Rouch, S, Peter Pranis Jr, AP, and District Commander Karl Fernandes, JN.



LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY POWER SQUADRON

A UNIT OF UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS

SAIL AND POWER BOATING

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Anthony Venegas
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Brownsville TX. 78526

