

# THE TRIDENT

*Voice of the Balboa Sail and Power Squadron, District 28*

*A Unit of United States Power Squadrons®*

*Sail and Power Boating*

August 2009

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## Past Commander's Corner

*P/C Wes Heusser, JN*

Here's a copy of a letter I sent recently to our District Commander (D/28):



P/C Wes Heusser, JN

*Dear District Commander:*

*Following up on our brief conversation of 16 July, I decided to take a small, unscientific survey regarding the everyday boater's awareness of the United States Power Squadrons.*

*I carried out this survey at the Newport Dunes launch ramp in Newport Beach, California, where all of the people I talked to were trailer boaters.*

*Over the three-day period 17-19 July, 2009, I quizzed a total of 100 people, asking them if they had heard of or know about:*

- 1. The U.S. Coast Guard*
- 2. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary*
- 3. The United States Power Squadrons*
- 4. The Sea Scout program*
- 5. Orange Coast (California) Boating*

*These were my findings:*

- All 100 people had heard of the U.S. Coast Guard*
- 95 had heard of the Coast Guard Auxiliary*
- 10 had heard of USPS*
- 60 had heard of the Sea Scout program*
- 62 had heard of Orange Coast Boating*

*As you see, USPS came in a distant fifth.*

*I asked a few of the people who had heard about USPS*

*See PAST COMMANDER, page 2*

## Historian's Log

*Lt Robert Faley, AP*

Continuing our listing of historical facts from the past:

Did You Know: in 1914 the United States Power Squadrons organization was founded when the men of the Boston Yacht Club banded together and chose Founder Roger Upton as our first USPS Chief Commander and in 1916 Charles F. Chapman as our first USPS Treasurer? Members were required to take part in naval-type maneuvers and drills annually in order to retain their membership. Everyone was addressed as "Captain." After World War I in 1919, education became a major concern for USPS. A five-week class in Nautical Astronomy and a Junior Navigation class were offered. Merit Marks in the 20's were bestowed by the Chief Commander. In 1922 the mandatory drills were discontinued and a cruise and one drill were substituted instead. As a preliminary to Junior Navigation, Piloting and Chart work classes were instituted in 1926.

Did You Know: our name UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS is a matter of Congressional record, and as such, has both historical significance and prestige?

Our original incorporation in the State of Massachusetts was changed in 1937 to the District of Columbia. The request to so incorporate there was contained in the House of Representatives Bill HR.6631 of the 75th Congress, dated 23 April, 1937.

More in my next column.



Lt Robert Faley, AP

*Find us on the web at:  
[www.balboapowersquadron.org](http://www.balboapowersquadron.org)*

what they knew about the organization. One woman said her father had been a USPS member but his Squadron dissolved and she thought USPS had too. A man told me he once took a USPS class (not Balboa, but another Squadron in District 28) but it was so boring, and the instructors were so old and dried up that he sent his wife instead to a CGAux class in Newport Beach, where they have since taken two additional classes each.

That same week I carried out ten VSCs and asked about any classes the boaters had taken: four had taken no classes, two had taken classes from CGAux and four had taken USPS classes. I asked if any had become members of USPS: none had. One lady told me that if she wanted to hang out with a bunch of old people she could visit her grandparents any time!

Commander, what can we do to keep our Sea Scouts interested? As they turn twenty-one their dues go from \$12 a year to over \$80. This might frighten some off, but we must do something to keep them in boating ... and USPS.

I want to get USPS out into the mainstream, into the eyes of boaters. I know Connie Johnson has some good things going (thanks, Connie), but we need more positive and pro-active thinkers of this kind if USPS is to remain viable and relevant in today's world.

There, I've said enough.

USPS to the end,

P/C Wes Heusser, JN

Balboa Squadron

On other matters:

Our *Navigation Class* is still going strong. In contrast to the previous Navigation course, there is a lot of computer-based work, so I fear I'm holding the class back [*Wes, you're too modest. Ed*].

Our instructor Peter Redwood keeps me going. I've had no requests from *anyone* for other classes; that's sad, and perhaps bears on the topics I discussed in my letter to D/28 above.

VSCs as of 24 July were 275; that's more than I had by 15 August last year. Must be doing something right.

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## AIS

*Lt Peter Redwood, SN*

The Automatic Identification System (AIS) is a short range coastal tracking system used on ships and by Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) for identifying and locating vessels by electronically exchanging data with other nearby ships and VTS stations. Information such as unique identification, position, course, and speed can be displayed on a screen or similar device. AIS is intended to assist the vessel's watchstanding officers and allow maritime authorities to track and monitor vessel movements, and integrates a standardized VHF transceiver system such as a LORAN-C or Global Positioning System receiver, with other electronic navigation sensors, such as a gyrocompass or rate of turn indicator.

The International Maritime Organization's (IMO) International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires AIS to be fitted aboard international voyaging ships with gross tonnage (GT) of 300 or more tons, and all passenger ships regardless of size. It is estimated that more than 40,000 ships currently carry AIS class A equipment.

AIS is used in navigation primarily for *collision avoidance*. Due to the limitations of VHF radio communications, and because not all vessels are equipped with AIS, the system is meant to be used primarily as a means of lookout and to determine risk of collision rather than as an automated collision avoidance system, in accordance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS).

While requirements of AIS are only to display a very

See **AIS**, page 3

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## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Malcolm M. Coston, Sarah Cousins, Corey C. Lownes, Barbara Murphy, Dean S. Russell, Mark A. Thompson, James N. Wilson

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## AUGUST GMM

The 20 August Dinner Meeting will be held at the Newport Beach Tennis Center at the usual 1800/1900 time.

Call Helen Thomas (949) 715-2050 or email her at [davethomasaacap@aol.com](mailto:davethomasaacap@aol.com) to make a reservation.

### AIS, from page 2

basic text information, the data obtained can be integrated with a graphical electronic chart or a radar screen, providing consolidated navigational information on a single display.

The AIS transponder sends accurate navigation information such as:

- Static information — vessel call sign, name MMSI number, dimensions and type
- Voyage-related information — draft, cargo type, destination and estimated time of arrival
- Dynamic information — time in universal time, coordinated, latitude/longitude position, course over ground, speed over ground, heading, rate of turn and navigational status

There are two types of shipboard AIS available: Class A AIS for larger ships such as those subject to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention, and Class B AIS for smaller ships. Each Class A AIS system consists of a 12.5W VHF transmitter, an integral global navigation satellite system (i.e. GPS) receiver, two VHF TDMA receivers, one VHF DSC receiver, and standard marine electronic data interface (IEC 61162/NMEA 0183) to shipboard display and sensor systems (AIS Schematic). Position is normally derived from an external navigation receiver and timing information derived from the integral GPS receiver, although the integral receiver does provide position information as a backup. Precise position information in coastal and inland waters is available too, from either a dGPS receiver or equivalent ↗

information broadcast by an AIS base station. Other information broadcast by the AIS, if available, is electronically obtained from shipboard equipment through standard marine data connections. Heading information and course and speed over ground would normally be provided by all AIS-equipped ships. Other information, such as rate of turn, angle of heel, pitch and roll, and destination and ETA could also be provided.

Class B AIS generally consists of a 2W VHF transmitter, a GPS receiver and two VHF receivers, one of which is able to decode DSC transmissions as well as AIS.

A receive-only AIS device is useful for recreational boaters who travel in heavily-trafficked areas. I have seen devices advertised on the Internet for under \$500. If you'd like to see the kind of information that AIS provides, log on to: [www.MarineTraffic.com](http://www.MarineTraffic.com)

This web site provides *real-time* marine traffic information for dozens of ports across the world. For instance, log on to the web site and select *Los Angeles* as the port. Then display the real-time map showing all AIS-equipped vessels in the vicinity, together with ship photographs, destinations, and other details. This is a Google map, so it's easy to move around, change scale, and so on.

For more information on AIS, go to the Coast Guard web site at:

[www.navcen.uscg.gov/enav/ais/default.htm](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/enav/ais/default.htm)

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