

RESACA ECHO

**The Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron
Sail and Power Boating News
Volume 34 Number 2
A Unit of the United States Power Squadrons®
District 21**



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

Ni hao y'all. Hello again from Shanghai. As much as the work over here is interesting and rewarding, I sure do miss being back home with my Power Squadron friends and being able to do my daily normal tasks. I have been able, so far, to arrange my return trips to Texas around Power Squadron events, or to slightly modify our bridge meeting schedule in order to be able to attend the meetings. I surely do appreciate all of your kind understanding on working through these scheduling conflicts. I expect this will continue for a few more months, and I will make every effort to be at as many functions as possible.

As I write this, we are in the middle of our annual Boating Course, and I was able to attend the 1st week, and will be there for the 3rd and 4th weeks. We have a bright eager group of students, and a larger class than we have seen in several years. Thanks to Peter Pranis, our Education Officer, Jerry Carrillo, our Assistant Ed. Officer, and all of you who are teaching a section or two. You are the face of our organization to the general public, and as always you do such a fine job.

I'd put in a plug for the Change of Watch on March 10th, but this edition won't be

published before the event happens. So I will say "thanks to all of you who came to the change of watch, and I am sure we all had a lot of fun."

Don't forget the Spring Conference to be held in Austin at the end of March, beginning of April. Please attend if you can. Austin has put in a lot of work to make this a fun, informative, and beneficial meeting. Details are on the website, and each of you should have received a flyer in the mail describing all of the activities and information on how to register.

I wondered what to talk about in this article, and I thought "boating news from China" might be interesting. In looking through the past few days of newspaper articles there actually are several nautical themed pieces of news. Here are a couple of the more interesting ones:

A fisherman found an old bomb about 6 feet long and 10 inches in diameter in the Yangtze River very close to a ferry dock. The bomb was dropped from a Japanese plane during fighting around Shanghai in the 1930's. They have occasionally found smaller bombs the size of water bottles in the area over the past several years, but this is the largest one reported. They will suspend the ferry boat activity for one morning, cordon off the area, and remove it from the river. Although there is little chance this old bomb could explode, they are not taking any chances.

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Bridge 2007-2008

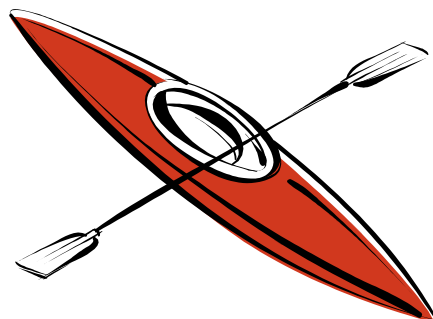
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The Fengxian district of Shanghai is positioning itself to be the country's yachting base by the year 2010. This district is in southern Shanghai, and is famous for its beaches and ocean resorts. The China State Shipbuilding Corp teamed up with the district to set up the county's first yacht manufacturing base that targets both domestic and overseas buyers. According to the plans, a pleasure boat city will cover over four square miles. The first phase includes a central island, a wharf with 2,000 berths and a yacht club. There will then be six sub-areas that will include yacht production, yacht components area, interior decoration and wood engraving workshops, shipping and storage, yachting research and development, and an

administrative center. There is also a large effort to develop the coastline with a yacht entertainment theme by adding high-end facilities, including repair shops, hotels, and entertainment facilities. This focus on domestic yachting is new to China. They currently have over 300 yacht manufacturing enterprises but these all export goods to over 70 countries. Currently there are tight restrictions on pleasure boating along the coast and rivers, mainly due to the dangers of high barge traffic, and pleasure boaters historically have been confined to inland lakes that are generally too small and shallow for large power boats. The government is planning to promote the boating economy step-by-step.





Editor's Note

I apologize for the late newsletter. Between late articles and busy weekends, the newsletter had to be postponed 'til later, a whole month later. But, I finally got it finished. I hope you enjoy!

Me and my father attended the change of watch. If you went, you know that it was really fun. We were late for the food and had already eaten by the time we got there, but we got to see some of the dog races. I also won an award, the Mittelsteadt Award. This award is given out to the most active new member, and I won it for my work on the newsletter. Thank you!

WE MADE THE ENSIGN! One of the Resaca Echo's safety articles was entered in the March/April 2007 issue of the USPS national magazine, the Ensign. Congratulations to the LRGV Power Squadron!

I went fishing on April Fools Day, and guess what, I CAUGHT DINNER! Yes, I caught two speckled trout in the 2 hours we were on the water, one 20 in., the other 18 in. I also caught a few ladyfish that we didn't keep. I was the only one who caught something that was a keeper. Yay for me!

Well, not much else to say except I hope you enjoy this issue of the Resaca Echo. Have fun!

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. (Estimated Cost: \$12.00), Bring Your Own Adult Beverage of Choice. Mixers and Ice will be provided.

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 \$25.00 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** , Home of Cdr Kay Polt, Harlingen, TX.

19 Apr — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm

28 Apr— **Social Function**, Home of Daniel Bauer, Harlingen, TX Time TBD

10 May — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm

19-25 May— **National Safe Boating Week**

14 Jun — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm

12 Jul — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm

27-28 Jul— **District 21 Nautical Coop Charting**, Hosted by LRGV, Port Isabel, TX

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

Lake Amistad Rendezvous

APRIL 27-29

HOTEL INFORMATION

Block of rooms under name of Jim Davant or San Antonio Sail & Power Squadron

Lakeview Inn Diablo East
11704 W US Highway 90
Del Rio, TX 78840
(830) 775-9521
Rate: \$47

Comfort Inn & Suites
3616 Veterans Blvd.
Del Rio, TX 78840
(830) 775-2933
Rate: \$75

\$12 per person covers Bar-B-Q dinner Friday and Hors d'oeuvres Saturday evening before dinner.

Friday evening Bar-B-Q at San Pedro Pavilion on Spur 454 around 6 PM. Bring your OWN favorite Beverage. Park Ranger John Little will give us the latest news about the area.

Saturday we will travel on Lake Amistad to the cave paintings and enjoy the surprisingly interesting scenery. Bring a picnic lunch.

Saturday evening BYOB cocktail party at Potempa's room at Comfort Inn—time and room number TBA.

Saturday evening after cocktail party—meet at local restaurant for dinner—time and restaurant TBA.

Sunday leisurely trip home.

Registration Deadline Wed April 25th: (Email, Snail Mail or Call)

Name: _____ # of Persons @ \$12 = _____

_____ I am bringing a boat _____ I am not bringing a boat

Mail to:

Jim Davant
19946 Park Hollow
San Antonio, TX 78259
(H) (210) 497-4014
(W) (210) 280-4116
email: jdavant@sabx.rr.com

What is happening in Laguna Madre? Luis R Venegas

State may limit seatrout bag.

If new state regulations pass this year, the bag limit for seatrout will be dropped from 10 to 5 fish per day in the lower Laguna Madre. If approved, the new limit will take effect in September of 2007.

Seatrout minimum size of 15 inches long.

We should promote more catch and release seatrout fishing to help preserve the population. By doing this, we will enjoy boating in a safe way for both the environment and ourselves. Preserving our Laguna Madre fish will leave a legacy of safe, fun fishing for our children and grandchildren.

Other news from Laguna Madre

During this winter and spring, seismic testing for oil and gas exploration has been going on with loud airboats and unhappy Laguna

Madre area residents, and not just humans but fish and birds, too. Multiple markers can be seen all over the Laguna Madre area. These markers make boating somewhat more challenging, and instead of enjoying the ride, boating becomes an obstacle course to avoid these markers. Although, according to the Lower Laguna Madre Foundation (LLMF), these tests were done in Port Mansfield with minimal environmental impact, they will pay attention to concerns from residents and observe the projects for environmental safety. Count on support from the LRGV Power Squadron! Note: FYI: P/C Rakestraw is on the Board of LLMF



EDUCATION REPORT Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP

It has been a busy winter for Squadron members educationally! We are finishing up an Engine Maintenance course and the Squadron Public Boating Course. Not only that, but the new Seamanship Course just came out so get ready for it. Lastly, a number of Boating Course students have indicated that they want on water practice and the Seamanship Course as new members.

Engine Maintenance

Eleven members signed up for the Engine Maintenance course which kicked off in late November 2006. As a first, all classes were held on Saturday mornings at Rob Youker's boat dealership, "The Sportsman" in San Benito. Rob was a great host. He had his service manager, Junior Pena, give us presentations during the classes using the boats and engines in the showroom as well as parts from the ship as "hands on, show and tell". Junior's talks really hit home.

Some of the major points Junior made were:

1. 90% of his repair work relates to fuel problems
2. Everyone needs to add fuel stabilizer to every load of fuel that goes into the boat. Fuel will deteriorate over time. Further, no telling how long the fuel has been in the fuel dock's tanks. Therefore, the fuel could have deterioration products such as varnishes and sludge in it as well as water.
3. "Dry gas" is another good additive to use for gasoline. It dissolves water in the gas tank's bottom into the fuel so it can be run through the engine and out the exhaust.
4. Diesel users need both a fuel stabilizer and a biocide additive to kill fungi which grow at the fuel-water interface at the bottom of the fuel tank. Once on the water, the boat's motion stirs up the fuel so you are pulling fungi and fuel into the fuel lines. This is why diesels have at least two fuel filters in the fuel line.
5. Drain condensation water from the bottom of your fuel tank(s) regularly to reduce water problems in fuel.
6. The electronic ignition systems running virtually all new marine engines are almost impossible for recreational boaters to repair on their own. These engines use computer diagnostics not available to boaters. Plus, now we are talking about repairs that are close to rocket science!
7. Other points that came through loud and clear were:
 - a. Always carry spare parts for those things that you can repair while out on water:
 1. water pump impellers and gaskets (especially for inboards)
 2. engine belts, if used
 3. spark plugs
 4. fuses
 5. lights
 - b. A tool kit to do the above repairs.

The above points are obviously not exhaustive of all that was covered in the course. While the course was great as a class where students bounced ideas off each other and the instructors, it can be done as a home study course. Interested? Call Pete Pranis, AP for how to get started.

Eleven members enrolled in the course. It looks like at least nine will finish it.

Finally, a special thanks to Stuart Simpson, AP for teaching a lot of course sections. Stu has a lot of hands on experience from repairing and rebuilding engines. His "war stories" brought home a lot of points to make sense to the Squadron members. Stu is getting to be a really good instructor. Thank you Stu!!!

The Squadron Boating Course

Enrollment for the Squadron Boating Course was slow during the first two days at the Boat

Show. It picked up on Sunday, the last day. So, coming out of the Boat Show we had 12 students. Then Bayliner's staff signed up so we wouldn't have to teach two courses back to back or face the border crossing hassles brought about by 9/11 and Homeland Security.

When classes started we had 22 students. This includes three boys, three ladies, and sixteen men. This is a really exceptional group of students. Everyone has kept up with the material. They ask questions! Even when they "go off the deep end" on a question; it is a logical deep end. Therefore, it doesn't take much time to get them back on track. They are thinking all the time.

This year's Boating Course had eleven instructors teaching sixteen course sections. They all did a really outstanding job.

As a first, Keith Shantz, AP will give a short presentation on boat surveys and boat surveyors at the course's end. It will not only be a good summary of a lot that has been covered; but, more importantly, will give students a heads up on the quality of used boats.

A special thanks to the folks who provided the class with lunches, coffee, soft drinks and donuts:

1. Boo Boo Lewis P and Larry Lewis S (Ship wreck stew), donuts and drinks.
2. Evelyn Rutledge and Gayle Mitchell Shantz (Hot bean, sausage, beef stew, and lots of raw veggies) Bill Rutledge AP and Keith Shantz AP supervised.
3. Jacquie Simpson (make your own sandwiches, veggies and cake) Stu Simpson AP supervised.

These lunches were not only delicious, but they weren't so heavy as to put the students asleep for the afternoon classes.

More coffee, donuts, and fruit were provided by Chris Rakestraw AP and Gerry Carrillo P. Again, the food, donuts, and snacks were really great. They help make the class a friendly get-together, rather than an endurance test.

Points for the Squadron to Think About for Next Year's Course

1. USPS is apparently no longer carrying the square "quick course plotters". The Squadrons are going to be exclusively using the 4"x15" plotters instead. The 4"x15" plotter seems to confuse beginning students, even the ones as sharp as those in this year's class. SEO Pete Pranis AP checked with Weems & Plath, the makers of both types of plotters. The Squadron can get Weems & Plath's "square course plotter", #555, for \$5.00 each. (Weems & Plath's phone:410-262-6700) This should be done in the future. The only problem is that the upcoming Boating Course text book might only show how to use the 4"x15" plotter.
2. The 4"x15" plotter pars when left in a hot car! Ivan Riveron, one of this year's students, made this discovery the hard way. The Squadron will give him a replacement and chalk it up to a learning experience.

Some time back, students could tear the end section of questions out of their books so the answers could be graded by proctors while class was continuing. The proctors would flag any questions a lot of students had problems with for further review at break time. This needs to be brought back, even if it means that the Squadron copies all the questions and gives each student a set to be answered and turned in for correction.

4. With pages to be graded and normal turnover, the Squadron is always looking for new instructors. Instructors start by "proctoring" the course. This exposes the proctors to a variety of teaching styles and serves as a painless review of the class materials. Then, after a couple of times (or as many as the proctors want) they can teach.

Proctors replace instructors who burn out on the topics they've been teaching as well as jumping in on short notice for those who can't teach for one reason or another. This year, Larry Lewis, S did a super job teaching Marine Radio as a sub for Stu Simpson, AP who had a bad case of the flu. Stu also did a great job as a first timer on Adverse Conditions.

If you are interested in helping the Squadron teach, talk to SEO Pete Pranis, AP or Assistant SEO Gerry Carrillo, P. They are always looking for new talent.

Seamanship

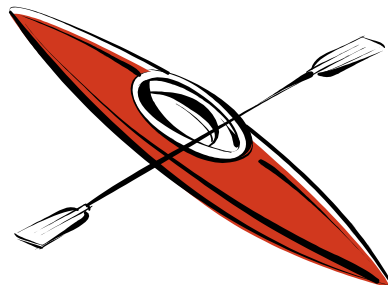
Last Fall we were hoping to teach Seamanship along with the Boating Course. This is a very successful scheme Keith Shantz, AP pioneered 6 or 7 years ago. Unfortunately, we got caught between changes in the Seamanship text books. The new books didn't hit headquarters until Friday 2 March. The Squadron ordered to instructor kits and a student kit on Monday 5 March for review before we scheduled a course.

The new 2007-2008 Squadron roster indicates that 20 members out of 51 could take Seamanship plus new members we expect to pull in from this year's Boating Course.

This Seamanship Course will include an "on water" element. There are at least five reasons for having an "on water" component to Seamanship:

1. The Boating Course students from Bayliner want on water instruction to handle company boats they can use. These boats are two 17.5 foot bowriders and 30 footer schedules to arrive in the next few months. Most of the Bayliner students have little or no boating experience. Thus we are a very logical source of on water training for them. They recognize the legal liability issues that make it necessary for them to become Squadron members before we can do this.
2. The Squadron has been kicking around the idea of a "Sea Going Rodeo" similar to a car, bicycle or truck rodeos testing driver's ability to handle their vehicles since Joe Luna proposed it around five years ago. The idea is to replace traffic "cones" with one gallon plastic orange juice jugs filled with insulation foam. The jugs will be tied to 4 ounce sinkers with a length of braided line sufficient to keep the jugs pretty stationary on the water's surface. The jugs will be laid out in patterns for the boats to maneuver around. For example, to measure stopping distances at different speeds, docking maneuvers, slaloms, turning radii at different speeds etc. Readers: Come up with more ideas! Once we get the bugs worked out, we could open up the "Sea Going Rodeo" to the public. Safe Boating Week would be a good time for this. As a public event it would serve four functions: public boater safety education, more education for our members, a great publicity tool, and perhaps a way to recruit members.
3. It would seem to fit the squadrons' new emphasis on inland, coastal, and off shore boater certifications. So, it is hard to see how headquarters could object. Reportedly, "Sea Going Rodeos" are routine in Florida where they are called "polkas".
4. These rodeos will enrich the courses we teach. Ironically, it was another Bayliner suggestion which prompted us to develop the "classroom fix" exercise for the Boating Course and Piloting.
5. The rodeo will help sharpen members' boating skills as an on water event, even if not as part of a course.

We need your input as to what should be included in our "Sea Going Rodeo". Talk with Larry Lewis, S, our Boating activities Chairman, Stu Simpson, AP, or Pete Pranis, AP with ideas. At the same time, bounce Ideas off all other Squadron members you can talk to. The more ideas and thinking the better!



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Birthday's for March-April-May

Stuart D. Simpson Jr.	March 01
James B. Palmquist	March 06
Paul E. Guerin	March 07
Isabel Glore	March 09
Rolando Lozano	March 14
Phyllis Carey	March 15
Robert C. Ewing	March 21
Jacob S. Sollner	March 26
Keith S. Shantz	April 14
Kathryn E. Polt	April 16
Gary Daniel Paradiso	April 23
Martha Denise Lewis	April 25
Wm. L. (Bill) Ballou	April 29
Orren Ketchum	April 29
James F. Guffey	May 11
Meredeth Guerin	May 25
Sid Rouch	May 27



MERCEDES BOAT SHOW PICTURES



LAGUNA MADRE OIL EXPLORATION PROJECT PICTURE



A PRETTY PICTURE



Boat Show Question

Over the past 7 or 8 years we've become increasingly casual in our Boat Show attire, to the point where it is hard to tell us from the audience. So have most of the other vendors, so it is hard to tell if they've just fallen off a fish wagon, let alone a turnip truck. Has this gone too far? Clearly we don't want to go back to uniforms with shoulder boards and ties that make us look like some type of police. But what about at least embroidered shirts with our logo or a blazer with an open shirt or shirt and tie. All with pressed pants or skirts (how do you press a skirt?). Such a dress code will set us apart from the herd. It might suggest, "hey, these guys and dolls might really have something to offer!"

Your thoughts??

Highlights of the Arroyo Colorado Plan

An excerpt from the Brownsville Herald

-Habitat improvement: Work with drainage districts to reduce erosion and modify ditches; implement slope-stabilizing projects to reduce sediment in arroyo; reduce storm water runoff by constructing wetland systems to treat it; construct wetland systems to treat wastewater-plant discharge; build large wetland systems to treat runoff from multiple sources.

-Wastewater Infrastructure: Municipalities have agreed to connect 68,000 additional Colonia residents with wastewater services, reducing sewage runoff into arroyo; six new wastewater-treatment facilities and nine upgrades to existing facilities are planned.

-Agriculture: Encourage farmers to adopt best-management practices that would reduce pollutants in arroyo; goal is to get 10 percent of irrigated land in the arroyo watershed on a water-management plan by 2010 and 50 percent by 2015.

-Education and outreach: Inform the public about the Arroyo Colorado, its conservation, and its protection.

-Storm water management: Work with a storm water task force, a partnership of municipalities, to improve compliance with new TCEQ storm water rules.

Note: our own P/C Rakestraw is a member of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan Steering Committee & the Habitat Restoration Work Group.

Executive Committee Meetings

The Executive Committee runs the Squadron. All Squadron members are welcome to attend the Executive Committee meetings held on the second Thursday of the month at 1830 at Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen. However, would members who can't make these meetings like to see the Executive Committee meeting minutes in the Echo?? Let the Echo editor Tony Venegas know what you want!! His E-mail address is: VenAnthony@sbcglobal.net



LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY POWER SQUADRON

A UNIT OF UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS

SAIL AND POWER BOATING

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5493 Rustic Manor Dr.
Brownsville TX. 78526

