

Resaca Echo

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron
Sail and Power Boating News

A View from the Bridge



**Cdr Barbara J.
Ketchum, S
LRGV**

**Commander's Mes-
sage:**

Well, here it is in a nutshell, the Holidays are fast approaching, more than I would like to see it happen.

In October we lost one of our own Squadron Members, Paul Thompson Jr. He served the Squadron well, as our Squadron Chaplain, and then he became involved with the wrong

kind of people, and regretfully lost his life. We will definitely miss him, may he rest in peace.

With the year coming to a fast end, we have so many events scheduled, that it's hard to keep them straight. For example, on November 13-14, we finished our Coop Charting Event, which I might add was very successful. The 13th we had 32 people show up for our tailgate party, and on the 14th we had 5 boats each one carrying 4-5 people, and we accomplished a lot of markings on the water, that were not on the charts, which lead to a very interesting day.

Coming December 5th, we have

our annual Christmas Party. However, unlike last year, we are going to start with a tailgate party at the public boat ramp. Afterwards we will go ahead and watch the lighted Christmas Boat Parade on water. The night before however (December 4th), we have a parade at South Padre Island; down the Main Street. Also, on December 10th, we have our Bridge Meeting, followed by our Nomination Recommendations for the upcoming Bridge Officers for 2010-2011. January 16th is our next dinner meeting and Annual Meeting, the place is still undecided.

United States
Power Squadrons®
District 21

Resaca Echo

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Official Publication of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron

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send you're articles and photos to Yazmin



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Bridge 2008 -2009

Commander Barbara Ketchum, S

Executive Officer Sid Rouch, S

Educational Officer Peter P. Pranis, Jr., AP

Administrative Officer Kenneth "Larry" Lewis, S

Secretary Kathryn E. Polt, AP

Treasurer John B. Carey, Jr., JN

Asst SEO Gerardo Carrillo, P

Members at Large

Bruce Bauer

Daniel Bauer

E. Karlene (Boo) Ewing

Robert C. Ewing

Martin S. Glore, S

James B. Palmquist, P

William A. Rutledge, AP

Gary S. Sollner

Auditing Committee

Jacqueline M. Judah, P

(Chair)

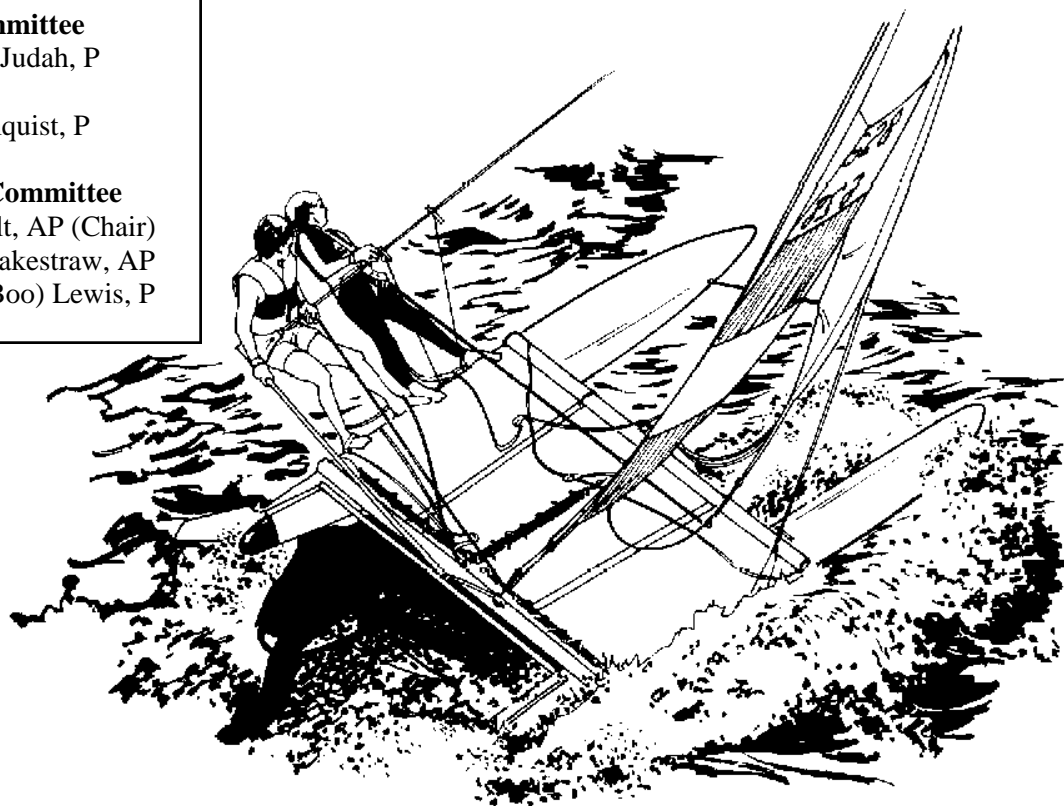
James B. Palmquist, P

Nominating Committee

Kathryn E. Polt, AP (Chair)

Christine G. Rakestraw, AP

Martha (Boo Boo) Lewis, P





**Past Commander Paul Eugene Thompson Jr., AP
1 June 1947– 8 October 2009**

Past commander, and advanced pilot; Paul E. Thomson, Jr. met life's challenges with uncommon courage. He was first diagnosed with polio at the age of three, in a time when polio epidemics were regularly sweeping over America. Doctors informed his parents not to expect their son to live to see his seventh birthday. However, he managed to do just that, and much more in spite of the polio's lingering effects.

Paul was the first physically challenged Boy Scout in South Texas to earn Scouting's highest honor, "The order of the Eagle Scout". The second and third highest scouting honors, "The order of the Arrow" and the "God and Country Award", were also Paul's achievements. In the course of Scouting Paul and his brother George, created and operated a home-based chicken egg business. Again, for a merit badge, Paul got into bee keeping for home consumption honey. He kept bees for many years after that. Finally, He remained associated with Scouting for a long time as a troop advisor.

Paul was no slouch in school either. He graduated from Donna High School in 1966, and later from The University of Texas Pan American in 1970 with a Bachelor's Degree in chemistry. He followed this up with a stint in the graduate school of chemistry at Southwest Texas State University at San Marcos.

He returned to the Valley in 1971 to work with Texas A & M crew worm eradication project which was based at Moore Field. Around 1980 he transferred to Weslaco's U.S Department of Agriculture research facility, where he worked as a chemist until his retirement in 2007.

During most of this time Paul was also very active in Donna's First Christian Church-Disciples of Christ, where he served as a church elder and on the church's board for many years. In addition, he served his church on the district and regional levels as well. In particular, his love of photography led to his being a church historian, something he carried over to his activities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron.

His musical and singing talents were gifts that he had in common with the other members of his family, and that found Paul in church and Donna City Choirs during his days. Playing the saxophone gave him entrée to high school and college band, while his penchant for acting brought him a number of part sin high school, college and amateur drama productions.

Resaca Echo

All throughout his full life, Paul's polio after effects were his constant companions. He faced them head on by actively participating in the "Rio Grande Valley Post Polio Support Group", the Lions Clubs' "Crippled Children's Camp", and the Scouts' physically challenged programs.

Through it all, people who met and dealt with Paul soon didn't think about his physical problems, but concentrated on his energy and abilities to make serious contributions to whatever activities he was engaged in. This virtue was demonstrated in full in Paul's Squadron endeavors.

The Thompson family started boating in the 1950's. Their first boat was sixteen feet long and was used primarily on Falcon Lake. All six Thompsons would be on board for fishing, boating and general fun.

As the children grew, the family ran out of room in the sixteen foot boat, so they moved on to a twenty foot one instead. Still tailored, it was primarily run out of Port Mansfield. Lastly the family got the thirty foot "Aloha" which was berthed at Port Isabel. The "Aloha" suffered serious storm damage, but just as its repairs were finished, it was stolen from its hard stand, never to be seen again. This led to the famous back yard boat hull in the mid 1980's that Paul and his dad worked on forever until Paul senior died.

Already having a lot of boating experience, Paul along with his mom and dad took the fourteen week Squadron Boating Course in 1973 from the Corpus Christi Squadron at a Brownsville location. Paul and his dad became member of the Corpus Christy Squadron that year.

By 1974, there were forty four member of the Brownsville Division of the Corpus Christi Squadron. Consequently, a charter for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron was issued on July 26, 1974. Paul was character member. Today Lieutenant commander John B. Carey, Jr., JN is the last surviving charter member in the squadron.

Paul poured his heart into the Squadron at Squadron District and National levels. He was into everything! He taught classes, was a stalwart in on water activities, bat shows, district and national conferences as; Squadron historian, chaplain, and commander. Furthermore, he earned the grade of Advanced Pilot with "Educational Proficiency". He earned thirty three Merit Marks, hence was a life member when he hit twenty-five Merit Marks.

At district and national levels Paul served on a number of committee and staff positions including being District 21 Chaplain of several years and serving on the district planning committee. Folks from other Squadrons and national always asked how Paul was doing. They will be deeply saddened to learn of his death.

Lastly, Paul served as Lower Rio Grande Valley Power Squadron Commander in 1982-83. In short, Paul poured his heart and soul into the Squadron as shown by his being a long, and serving Squadron newsletter editor and the Squadron's first webmaster in addition to everything else.

Over the past couple of years Paul's health had its ups and downs. However, he seemed fine at the 2008 Christmas party, but soon after began the decline that ended on October 8, 2009.

It is said that the good Lord doesn't give us more than we can handle, through the years Paul demonstrated that he could handle an awful lot of challenges. Paul left us with his record of successfully meeting challenges intact.

****Paul, God be with you. Rest in peace, you have earned it.****

2009 Calendar of Events

5 Dec — Christmas Party and Lighted Boat Parade . Dockside Tailgate Party starting 4:00pm at the end of Pompano Street near the public boat ramp. Bring a snack or covered picnic dish. Bring your own drinks. Bring a chair if you want to watch the parade sitting down rather than standing. Parade starts at 6:00pm at the turning basin in Port Isabel, next to Marchan's restaurant. So we will have good viewing from our tailgate party location.

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

2010 Calendar of Events

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

16 Jan — Annual Meeting and Election of Officers. Location: Amber Jacks Restaurant on South Padre Island.

22-23 Jan — Incoming Officers Meeting . Houston at the Nassau Hilton.

11 Feb — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm

19-20-21 Feb — All-Valley Boat show . Setup Thursday the 18th. Boat show Fri - Sat - Sun 9:00am - 7:00pm . Contact Pete Pranis to assist with setup, teardown, and manning the booth. We are planning to have a large booth, joint with Texas Parks and Wildlife and their JetSki simulator. This makes us the most popular booth at the event. We need your help.

7 Mar — Change of Watch and Awards Ceremony. SUNDAY Brunch. Location TBD.

11 Mar — Monthly Bridge Meeting, Carey Sheet Metal in Harlingen, 6:30pm

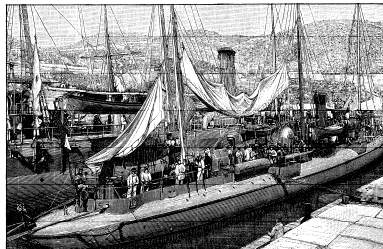
The All Valley Boat Show



Lt/C Peter P. Pranis,

It will be held at the McAllen Convention Center on the 19,20, and 21 of February, 2010. Set up will be Thursday February 18 in the afternoon. Last year boat dealers were pleased with the show last year (that is they sold a lot of boats), and are taking the whole exhibition hall! As part of the expansion, the dealers want to have exhibitors such as the Squadrons all

around the hall's perimeter walls. For this to be possible, the rents they charge will have to drop, or the economy will have to go on steroids.



Mark your calendars!!!!



Squadron Boating Course

The boating course will be taught March 6,13,20, and 27 of 2010 most likely in Harlingen, at the Marine Military Academy. The M.M.A is still putting its schedule together, so we don't have an iron clad com-

mitment at this time.

Secondly

We will teach seamanship at the same time as the boating course. Keith Shantz, AP came up with this idea years ago. It work! Since about half our

members need Seamanship this will be a good time to do it. Four Saturdays in a concentrated form gets it over fast. Plus, everybody interacts with the boating course students.

**"I've talked about a free space for Texas Parks & Wildlife's jet ski simulator and cut rates for us. They didn't laugh."
-Pete Pranis-**

Instructors Needed!!!!

Both, the Boating Course and Seamanship need instructors, don't be shy! If you figure you're not qualified, remember; the students know less than you! Even if you just reviewed the material the day before.

Also, we have excellent instructor section books for each course section. These books include materials from earlier course editions and chapters from "Chapman's piloting and Seamanship". In addition, the course

Power Point programs are good. Note: Teaching in this Squadron counts as part of the Instructor Development course. Why present "make believe" when you can do the real thing?

Instructor's Course

After the District 21 Fall Conference, we will have a one morning Instructor's retreat class for all old instructors and a class for all the new instructors with the exam.

Teaching Aids:

We can always use more teaching aids! They are great for classes and the Boat Show(or other boat shows). Nothing grabs people's attention like "hands on" stuff.

Think about it. Even if you only have an idea, but are not handy with tools, talk about it. Your awards! Finally, teaching aids really do work.

How Do You Want To Take Squadron Courses?

There are two ways to take Squadron Courses. First, you can take course classes with instructors and other students.

ADVANTAGES:

1. You are forced to keep up to a class schedule, hence complete the course quickly.
2. You have an instructor(s) and fellow students to bounce questions and /or ideas off.
3. Classes build camaraderie in the Squadron.

DISADVANTAGES:

1. Class schedules are not too flexible. If your schedule is erratic, you can miss a lot of material in class.
2. If you want to get through the courses quickly, this won't work. Normally only one or two

courses are taught a year.

The alternative is to take the courses by "correspondence". That is, you get the material and teach yourself. Here, you do all exercises and either self grade or have someone in the Squadron grade the homework.

The advantages to this are:

1. You work on the course as it fits your schedule.
2. If you can lock yourself in your study and work on the course all Saturday/Sunday or all weekend without outside interruptions (a big if), it is like taking a total escape vacation without leaving your abode (This is what I did. It was an unbelievable mental

flush!).

3. You might gain a deeper understanding of the material because you are both the teacher and the student.
4. You go through the courses as fast as you want.

The disadvantages are:

1. It is tough to keep to a schedule, especially with family demands for your time.
2. It requires a lot of self discipline.
3. It is lonely. Doesn't build much camaraderie.
4. You have to dig to answer your own questions. This can take hours I spent all afternoon looking for a buoy on chart 1210 TR!

Think about what way fits you best. We'll try our damndest to accommodate you.

Future Squadron Course Schedule

We will have a Seamanship class with the Boating Course. If there is interest, we can run a follow on a piloting course.

For electives, it is up to the members. What do you want? The courses are:

- Sail
- Engine Maintenance
- Marine Electronics
- Weather
- Cruise Planning
- Instructor Development

If you are thinking of teaching, you need to take Instructor Development. What we'll do is give a one day, or one morning class and exam.

Bill Gagan at Cougar Marine in Harlingen has offered to host Engine Maintenance. Plus, he has volunteered to use the students' own boats to show how to service the lower unit of their outboards-I/Os. For example, take apart, check, and lubricate. Also how to remove (maybe) the main propeller bearing for the propeller shaft if it isn't

corroded into the housing. Does this sound interesting?

The new Marine Electronics and weather courses have also gotten good reviews. Russell Judah, SN does a super job on the weather course.

Probably the best place for all electives except Engine Maintenance to be taught would be the Lower Laguna Madre Yacht Club or the club house on Long Island.

Sing out with your wants and ideas at meetings or call Lt/C Pete Pranis, AP at (956)-630-0648. The Squadron needs feedback on what you want.

Lastly, at the October dinner meeting Rick Ekstrom from Towboats U.S gave a great talk on towing and salvage. For example, getting unlimited towing from Boat U.S. an hour of towing costs about \$180! Salvage, that is if conditions are dangerous for the tow boat, normally runs at about 30% of the boat's value. Therefore, get insurance. Lots more for

the talk. We'll have him again, maybe at next year's Fall Conference.

Anyway George Milchuck and Dewitt Thomas had an interesting side conversation concluding that the Squadrons need an elective course on Boating and Fishing. Since over half of all boaters are primarily fishermen this makes sense. The course might have five main sections: 1.) fish biology, 2.) fish behavior, i.e. feeding, mating, survival: temperature protection from other fish, breeding; 3.) oceanography/limnology (seas/lakes); 4.) Navigation to find fishing spots and 5.) Boat handling techniques to stay with fish.

What do you think? Any ideas on what should be in the course? Where should we start? Do we need an outline or draft to get national's attention? Or should we just write up a course and see what happens? Feedback... please!



Are We Too Casual In Our Dress?

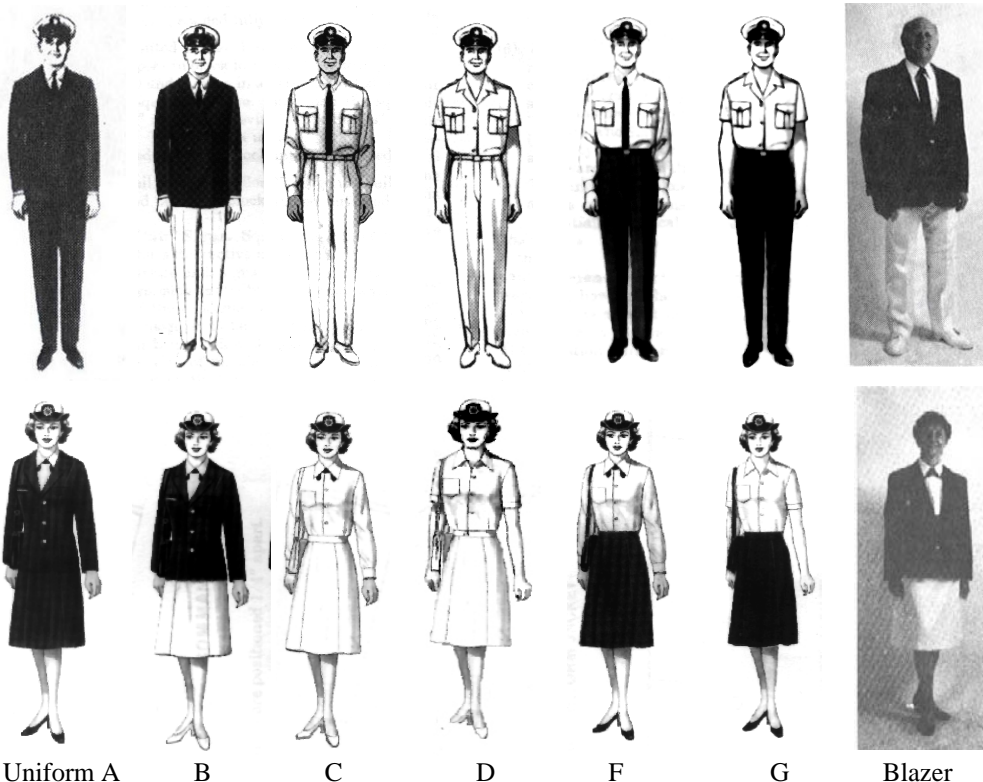
Another question that has been popping up at Bridge and dinner meetings and other get together is, "Are we dressing so casually that the public figures we just fell off a turnip truck so we shouldn't be taken seriously?"

The United States Power Squadrons was founded in 1914 when uniforms were taken seriously. Somebody could probably write a book or Ph. D thesis on why this was so. Anyway, since the Vietnam

generation, the attitude towards uniforms has been one of derision. The full U.S.P.S dress uniform has come to be considered "playing admiral". The less dressy shoulder board shirts, especially in the valley, have been thought to represent the police or immigration. Folks stay clear, Hispanic and Anglo alike.

Blazers and our embroidered Squadron shirts seem to still be acceptable to the public. Should we make a point of

wearing one or the other when we meet the public at the Boat Shows, Boating Classes, Vessel Safety Checks etc.? Will it help get new members? Your thoughts???



Uniform A

B

C

D

F

G

Blazer



UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS MEMBER'S PLEDGE

I do solemnly pledge to:
Abide by the bylaws of the United States
Power Squadrons;
Promote high standards of navigation and
seamanship;
To maintain and operate my boat legally;
Render assistance whenever possible;
And conduct myself in a manner
that will add prestige, honor, and respect
to United States Power Squadrons.



14th Annual District 21 Rendezvous



Texas' 48th Annual
Christmas Boat Lane Parade On Clear Lake

DATE: 12 December 2009
TIME: 1700 (5:00 PM)
PLACE: Hilton Houston NASA Hotel, Clear Lake, Texas

Join D/21 on the top floor of the Hilton Houston NASA Clear Lake Hotel for the annual D/21 Christmas Party. It's located on NASA Road 1 just across from the South Shore Harbour Marina, where the annual Christmas Boat Lane Parade starts and ends! Watch the parade in warmth and comfort, while visiting with old friends. Be sure to bring cameras, camcorders, and binoculars to enjoy the event to the fullest.

Act now – call 281-333-9300: ask for Nazie Greenwell. Tell her to get you the best Power Squadron rate and she will see what she can do! I.D. yourself as Power Squadron and only speak to Nazie to get the best rate! Charles Ashford has two rooms that come with the suite. If you are interested on a deal for one of the rooms, contact Charles Ashford at 713-962-4393.

The cost for this fun evening will be \$17/person if received by 1 December, after that date the cost will be \$25/person (late supplies cost more). Price includes beer, wine, mixed drinks, spiral cut ham, and the best view on the lake! AS ALWAYS for SQUADRON & DISTRICT EVENTS, PLEASE BRING AN HORS D'OEUVRE (no veggie plates please).

*This evening will be a great way to get into the holiday spirit,
and we guarantee no meetings!*

Please fill out and mail the coupon below:



Name (please print) _____

Telephone No. _____ No. Attending _____ Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Make your check out to Charles Ashford

Mail to: P/D/C Charles T. Ashford, SN
North Flamingo
Seabrook, TX 77586



LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY POWER SQUADRON

A UNIT OF UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS

SAIL AND POWER BOATING

Resaca Echo
Lt/C Peter P. Pranis Jr., AP
1901 N 13th St.
McAllen Texas, 78501

