

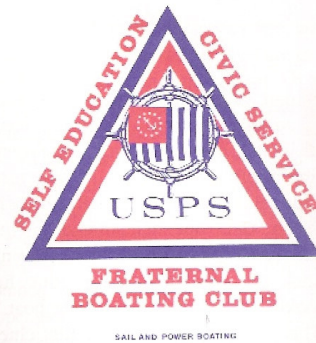
# North Strand Sail and Power Squadron



Linda and George Boyette



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BY KIM HUGHES

National Safe Boating Week is May 17-23 in 2008, and one local group with a vested interest in spreading the word is the North Strand Sail and Power Squadron.

Headquartered in North Myrtle Beach, the group is a unit of the United States Power Squadron and has been in existence since 2000. It currently has about 170 members, including owners of sail and power boats in the Carolinas as well as other states. (Boat ownership is not required.)

The group's mission is "to provide leadership in recreational boating safety through education and civic activities while promoting fellowship for its members."

Bob Candiano currently serves as the group's commander. "Our main focus is safe boating through education," he explained. Although boating is for many a recreational outlet with an emphasis on enjoying the area's waterways, safety must always be a priority.

"If you look in the news recently, the people that have been injured or died in boating accidents have not worn a life preserver. If you're going to be on the water, you need to be educated."

The group offers a wide variety of classes throughout the year with certified instructors. A course designed especially for beginners, America's Boating Course (ABC), is a great way for interested parties to get their feet wet, said members. Not only will this one-day class make participants better boaters,



Charlie and Marianne Schuler

believes there's no such thing as too much education. "More people do not know what they're doing than do know," Schuler said. Horry County leads the state in boating accidents and fatalities, a statistic that could definitely be improved through boater education.

In addition to teaching classes, the squadron also offers free vessel safety checks, completing more than 100 last year. These inspections help boat owners determine if they have the proper equipment aboard, including a fire extinguisher, flares and a signaling device such as a horn or whistle, as well as life preservers for each passenger. The overall condition of the boat is also evaluated during this check.

The North Strand Sail and Power Squadron gives back to the community through various civic activities, including keeping area charts up-to-date and available for the boating public, maintaining Heritage Park for North Myrtle Beach and helping to keep the waterways clean.

It's not all work, work, work, however. The group has an active social calendar, filled with potluck and catered dinners, picnics, mixers designed to introduce new members and, of course, water activities including cruises to Bird Island or south to Georgetown or Charleston. Those members who don't have boats are welcome to hitch a ride with someone who does. The group is always looking to add new members. The one common denominator for everyone who joins: a love of boats.

"Boating is fun, and we can teach you how..." Schuler reiterated.

"...to do it safely," Candiano quickly added, donning his commander's cap.

The next ABC safe boating class will be held June 7, 2008. Anyone interested in learning more about the North Strand Sail and Power Squadron can call 843-399-1342 or visit [www.northstrandsquadron.com](http://www.northstrandsquadron.com). ☺

but passing the test given at day's end and receiving certification can make the attendee eligible for insurance discounts as well.

Other courses offered include seamanship, piloting, navigation, cruise planning, engine maintenance, marine electronics, weather, sailing and "Skipper Saver," a class designed to teach passengers what to do if the skipper is incapacitated. Attendees are charged a nominal fee for each course to cover materials.

Charlie Schuler, the squadron's educational officer and a past commander,

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