

www.usps.org/localusps/saybrook/

Save the Dates

2010 ACTIVITIES

(For additional information on any of these events, contact any squadron officer. Contact information - Pg 2.)

30 Aug—4 September

USPS Governing Board
Bellevue, Washington

11 September, Saturday

D1 Poker Run/Rendezvous
Hamburg Cove, Lyme
See Page 3 and latest edition of *Sounds of 1*

13 September, Monday

SSPS Executive Committee
10 Duchess Drive
1900
Old Lyme, CT

18 September, Saturday

SSPS *Volsunga IV*
Thimble Island Cruise
Stony Creek, CT
Please see Page 3

1 February—6 February

USPS Annual Meeting
Buena Vista, Florida

A View from the Bridge

Commander Elaine Williams, AP, 10 Duchess Drive, Old Lyme, CT 06371-1357
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Did you encounter a boater, friend or foe, who you felt needed some education about boating this summer? If so, invite them to attend one of our courses that will be offered this fall. Have you noticed *many* boaters out there who have the American Flag flying on the bow of their boats? This is something that has bothered Les and me for quite a while. There were so many this summer, we couldn't keep track. They need to take a course and learn the proper way and place to fly the flag. We have so much to offer, please let your friends know about us.

BOATING IS FUN... WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW

I want to thank all the members who renewed their membership this year. We now have less than 100 members. That means WE NEED YOUR HELP! We want to continue with USPS and especially our Saybrook Sail and Power Squadron. There is so much you can do — not with a lot of your time — but with some of your time.

Our Educational Department is very important and we need instructors for our courses. Do you like to work with people? Are you friendly? You can teach! With summer coming to an end, we will be starting our educational courses.

Our Administrative Department, that handles the fun side of our programs, needs help with planning our monthly meetings. See the Page 3 description of our September meeting – A tour of the Thimble Islands. What a great trip this is! Contact me if you would like to come along. Maybe you have a great idea for a program – please give me a call.

Our Executive Department oversees our relationships and service programs with the outside community. We need Vessel Safety Inspectors, Cooperative Charting Workers, and other willing workers. Contact one of our bridge officers, (See Page 2), if you would like to get involved in some of the great activities that are available to you as a member of USPS.

Have a great and safe remainder of the summer!

It's your squadron; please get involved, we need your help!

Elaine Williams

Squadron Commander



**Saybrook Sail & Power Squadron
2009—2010 Officers**

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All About Boat Flags

The *United States Ensign*, (the fifty-star American flag) is the official national and merchant flag of the United States. All U.S. vessels are entitled to fly this ensign. It is generally flown from the flag staff at the stern, (never from a bow staff), with two possible alternatives; if the craft has a gaff-rigged mast (the after-most mast in the case of a multi-masted vessel), the U.S. Ensign may be flown at the peak of the gaff; or if the sailboat has a Marconi (conventional) rig, it may be flown two-thirds of the way up the leech, (the after-edge), of the aftermost sail. The U.S. Ensign is flown only between 0800 and sunset, except when entering or leaving port.



The *U.S. Yacht Ensign* features a blue canton, (top inner quarter), having 13 white stars and a fouled anchor. It originally was devised to identify documented yachts, but is no longer needed for that purpose. Some boaters like to fly the yacht ensign in place of the national ensign because they think it is "yachty". That's OK, but the preferred flag is the 50-star national ensign, especially since the yacht ensign should never be flown in international or foreign waters. Its use is limited to recreational boats, (any type or size), in domestic waters.



The *USPS Ensign*, the distinctive flag of the organization, may be flown only when the vessel is under direct command of a USPS member.

Today, most sailing members prefer to fly their USPS Ensign at the lower starboard spreader of the foremost mast, reserving the flagstaff at the stern (or gaff, or leech) for the national flag. When flown from the flagstaff at the stern, gaff, or leech, as a substitute for the U.S. ensign, the USPS Ensign is displayed only from 0800 to sunset, but never flown in place of the U.S. Ensign in foreign waters.



A *squadron burgee* is flown from the bow staff of power vessels so equipped, and from the foremost masthead of sailing vessels and masted power vessels without a bow staff. They are flown only when the vessel is in command of a member of the squadron.

Flag Size. The U.S. or yacht ensign, or USPS Ensign when flown in lieu of those, should be approximately one inch on the fly (length) for each foot of overall length of the boat. Essentially, all other flags (burgee, officer's flag, USPS Ensign, etc.) should be approximately one-half inch on the fly for each foot above the water of the highest mast on sail yachts, and five-eighths of an inch on the fly for each foot of overall length for motorboats. If the nominal size flag is not commercially available, the next larger available size should be selected.

Nautical Stuff.... (Just for fun) (*Westerly P.S. Variation*)

Sailboats are equipped with a variety of engines, but all of them work on the internal destruction principle, in which highly machined parts are rapidly converted into low-grade scrap, producing energy in the form of heat, which is used to boil bilge water; vibration, which improves the muscle tone of the crew; and a small amount of rotational force, which drives the average size boat at speeds approaching a furlong per fortnight.



D/1 Poker Run Saturday, 11 Sept

This is a fun day at Hamburg Cove, including a raft-up in the Outer Cove. Join the raft up Friday night or Saturday morning. Look for the USPS Ensigns flying.

Saturday there will be an 1100 Dinghy Poker Run in the cove, and a 1530 afternoon picnic at Hamburg Cove Yacht Club in the Inner Cove. Non-boaters will be ferried from their parked autos to the raft-up.

What is a Poker Run?

It is an organized event where the objective is to obtain the best poker hand. It is not a race, but a game of chance. Time does not matter; the best poker hands does!

Each participating skipper is instructed to navigate his boat to five checkpoints for which he is given clues. At each checkpoint, after correctly answering a boating question, he receives a sealed envelope containing a playing card.

The vessel may be a dinghy, Sunfish, kayak, or other tender. If you do not have a dinghy, other dinghy captains will dinghy you about! Only one entrant will be allowed per dinghy. The raft-up remains intact during the event.

The Grand Prize winner is the person with the best poker hand, with prizes for the second and third best hands. Winners are determined and prizes awarded at the cookout!

All participants must register before 11 September. Contact Poker Run Chairman P/C Joe Fernandes of the Meriden Squadron (1.860.276.9407) for more details. See the most recent edition of *The Sounds of 1* for more details, also.

View from the Bridge

Lt/C Barbara B. Bair, AP, Administrative Officer
234 Whippoorwill Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371
860.434.7560 whpt@msn.com

Saturday, 18 September, we will again tour the Thimble Islands aboard VOLSUNGA IV. Captain Bob Milne will guide us on a tour through the enchanted Thimble Islands and take a voyage back in time.

Located just off the shoreline town of Stony Creek, CT, the "Thimbles" have often been described as a "piece of the Maine coast that drifted into Long Island Sound and came to rest at Stony Creek."

The boat leaves promptly at 11:00 AM. (It is best to be at the dock 15 minutes early.) This is a trip that Saybrook Squadron made last year and a good time was had by all.

The cost of the trip is Adults: \$9.00, Seniors & Students: \$8.00, Children: \$5.00. Pay at the dock.

Stony Creek Market has a lunch menu and is a short walk from the dock.

I must have a count of those who wish to go by August 28. Please contact me by either telephone or e-mail. (860-434-7560 or whpt@msn.com)

The boat has a 48 person capacity. Reservations board first.

If you made this trip last year, I'm certain that you'll be on board again. If you didn't, please join us this year for a wonderful time in a wondrous nautical locale.

For directions to the Stony Creek Dock, please see Page 8 rear cover of this *Outer Light*.

Barbara Bair, AP, Administrative Officer

Still Time for a Vessel Safety Check!

If you have not requested a VSC, and do not have your 2010 VSC decal prominently displayed on your boat, contact P/C John Robinson, a member of our squadron who has been one of the leading USPS VSC examiners nationally every year for many years. John completed his 6000th VSC last year!

A Vessel Safety Check (VSC) is a courtesy examination of your boat, to help you ensure that your craft is equipped with certain safety equipment required by state and federal regulations. John will also offer recommendations and discuss safety issues with you that will make you a safer boater.

VCSs can be performed on personal watercraft as well

as kayaks and canoes.

A VSC is not a law-enforcement activity. No citation is ever given as a result of this examination. The VE will supply you with a copy of the evaluation so that you may follow some of the suggestions given. If your boat passes the exam, a distinctive VSC decal will be applied to your boat. It will not exempt you from law-enforcement boarding, but it may prepare you for a positive encounter.

You will want your boat to be in tip-top shape, with the appropriate equipment to insure a safe boating experience. A Vessel Safety Check will help you accomplish that goal! Contact John at 1- 860.739.7435 by telephone, or at j_rr7@yahoo.com by e-mail.



Three Myths about Ethanol

(Article taken from BoatUS E-line Newsletter June 2010, by Bob Adriance, Editor of Seaworthy, the BoatUS Marine Insurance damage-avoidance publication.)

In the five years since ethanol began to be widely used in the United States, a lot has been written about its properties, the problems it has created, and how to best cope with its possible effects. Some of the advice has been based on science and some on hearsay.

Seaworthy talked to two engineers who have over 75 years of combined experience working with gasoline: Jim Simnick, technical advisor at Global Fuels Technology, and Lew Gibbs, a senior engineering consultant and a Chevron Fellow. *Seaworthy* asked three questions about popular “myths” of how to deal with ethanol-enhanced gasoline. Their answers are summarized below.

Question: Does ethanol-enhanced gasoline (E-10) lose octane much faster than regular gasoline? This is an especially important question because many mechanics believe that octane loss during winter storage could be great enough to damage an engine when it is run in the spring. These same mechanics will often recommend leaving the tank almost empty so that fresh gasoline can be added in the spring to raise depleted octane levels.

Answer: While all gasoline loses octane as it ages, ethanol-enhanced gasoline loses octane at about the same rate as regular gasoline. Both Gibbs and Simnick said that the loss of octane over the winter would not be sufficient to damage an engine. However, all gasoline not just E10, should be kept as fresh as possible. They said it’s good practice to always add an antioxidant whenever the boat will be idle for long periods.

The recommendation to leave a tank mostly empty is bad advice because it could significantly increase the amount of water that gets into the tank through the vent. When enough moisture is attracted, the ethanol will “phase separate” from the gasoline. Leaving a tank mostly empty does three things to increase the chances of phase separation:

1. It increases the volume of open space in the tank (its “lung capacity”) so it can “breathe in” moist air.
2. An almost empty tank leaves more space on tank walls for condensation to form.
3. Leaving less gasoline in the tank means there will be less ethanol to absorb the condensation. It’s interesting to note that in areas of the Midwest that have been dealing with E-10 for over a decade, topping off tanks is common practice. (As an alternative, completely

emptying the tank would eliminate any chance of phase separation.)

If phase separation occurs, the highly corrosive ethanol/water mixture will settle to the bottom of the tank and remain there even after fresh fuel is added in the spring. The only way to remedy the problem would then be to drain the tank and add fresh gasoline. The best way to avoid phase separation over the winter (aside from draining the tank, which isn’t practical) is to leave the tank full, (95-percent full to allow for expansion), so that there is less moist air in the tank, less space for condensation to collect, and more gasoline to absorb whatever moisture does accumulate.

Question: Since E-10 attracts water, is it important to install a water separator to prevent the water reaching the engine?

Answer: Unlike regular gasoline, which can absorb almost no moisture, E-10 can hold up to ½ percent of water by volume, and the water molecules will dissolve in the fuel. The solubilized water will bypass the water separator and burn harmlessly through the engine. Only if phase separation were to occur would a water separator do its job, but by then the fuel itself would be the problem. Phase-separated gasoline consists of a water/ethanol mixture on the bottom of the tank and reduced-octane gasoline floating at the top; either of which will damage your engine.

Note, however, that a fuel filter (10-micron) is essential to keep gunk from reaching your engine. Ethanol is a solvent that dissolves resins, rust and dirt that have accumulated on older tank walls. Especially when you first make the transition to E-10, it is important to carry spare filters and a galvanized bucket to store used filters prior to disposal. Even in new engines and tanks, E-10 will sometimes form a mysterious gooey substance that will also clog filters. Richard Kolb, the manager of Emissions and Regulations for Volvo Penta, believes the goo is caused by water mixing with one or more of the 108 approved compounds that can be used in gasoline. These compounds vary among suppliers, so one solution is to change to a different brand of gasoline. Another is to use carburetor cleaner, which he says has sometimes remedied the problem.

Question: Are there additives that will prevent phase separation?

Answer: Both Gibbs and Simnick said that the additives that eliminate water may work incrementally to protect against phase separation, but as Jim Simnick said, there is no additive that will stand up to a good slug of water. Curiously, if E-15 were to be allowed, it

Please turn to Ethanol on Page 7



Coast Guard Inspects Boats for Safety

(U.S.C.G. e-newsletter 28 May10)

Ben Mosely and fishing buddy Adam Howard received good marks from the U.S. Coast Guard after an on-water safety inspection. The quick-boarding inspection revealed that the two men had life jackets, fire extinguishers, and every other safety device required for their fishing boat.

Coast Guardsmen were on enforcement patrol in their unit's 24-foot, shallow-water boat. The patrols are standard procedure for the Guardsmen, who regularly board recreational boats to make sure people are following federal laws.

Education is the important part of the inspections. The Coast Guard wants people to know that they can ask us any questions they may have about boating safety or rules on the water. It is best that they have an idea of the safe way to operate their boats when they get underway. The CT Department of Environmental Protection, the United States Power Squadrons, and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, offer free boat inspections.

Safety Equipment to have aboard before going on the Water:

- * Operable and appropriately sized life jackets for all onboard.
- * A flotation device that can be thrown from the boat.
- * A fire extinguisher (more than one for larger boats).
- * A sound producing device, such as a horn or whistle.
- * Proper lighting and markings.
- * Flares or other visible distress signal (required offshore, encouraged inland).

Things to do before going on the water:

- * Prepare food and water for the trip.
- * Tell someone where you are going, how you are planning on getting there, and when you will return.
- * Check your boat to make sure it's in good operating condition.
- * Check safety equipment.
- * Know the rules.

Nautical Rules of the Road

(Courtesy of the National Safe Boating Council)

Do you know what to do when approaching, meeting, or overtaking another boat? It is important that you know the "nautical rules of the road". They are the navigation rules for preventing collisions on the water.

Knowing the nautical rules of the road is important for all boaters. Knowing what to do when meeting another

Squadron Educational Corner

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Can you believe we are on the downhill side of summer? Wow, where did it go? So now you are ready to assume your off-season boating posture. Just what is your off-season posture going to be? Raking leaves, snow shoveling, football, basketball, (Go UCONN), television reruns, new shows, sitting at the computer?

How about prolonging your boating season with *boating education activities*? Be productive, do something to strengthen your knowledge of boating, your favorite recreational activity — boating! By getting involved in something as simple as a two-hour seminar, you will meet new friends---nice boaters, just like you. You have to take the first step, you have to call me and let me know what you want. I am ready



to deliver — just give me a call, or drop me an e-mail. I listed all that we had to offer last month. Dig out last month's Outer Light and see what interests you. Can't find your copy? Give me a call and I will help you decide.

Here is a special offer: Whatever course or seminar you sign up for, if you are the first one to sign up, it is for FREE! That is right — FREE! How can you beat that? However, it is up to you!

Let's have some fun this off-season, let's keep boating going all winter long. We can still do all of those non-boating things, (because we have to), but we can still find time for a two-hour seminar — a two-hour break from those "other" things.

I have made you an offer, how can you refuse? Put me to work - I am waiting!

Les Williams, Educational Officer

boat can prevent costly damage to your boat, personal injury, or even loss of life. Whenever you believe there is a risk of collision you should slow down, stop, or steer away from the situation.

Maintaining a proper lookout and a safe speed are all a part of the navigation rules and should be an important part of your boat operation. Take some time to learn the nautical rules of the road this summer and ensure safer boating for you, your family, and the other boaters on the water.

Get out your USPS Boating Course text and review the chapter on Navigation Rules. You will be happy that you have that knowledge when it is needed.



Saybrook Breakwater Light

(Excerpted from an issue of Current Trend of the Rowayton Sail & Power Squadron, by Bob Blair)

As the model for a series of CT automobile vanity plates, Saybrook Light is seen everywhere you look—in front of you—in back of you—whenever you are in a car. Its image is no longer enjoyed only by those who pass by in their vessels.

Centuries ago our forefathers were aware of the shifting sandbars at the mouth of the Connecticut River, but it was not until 1875 that two parallel breakwaters were constructed to correct the problem. The lighthouse was built in 1886 at the end of the west breakwater.

Constructed of cylindrical cast-iron caissons, and filled with concrete at the base, it was designed to last. And last it did, under the most trying times, including the infamous 1938 hurricane which devastated most of the Connecticut shoreline. The following are extracts from the 1938 log of Saybrook Breakwater Light Keeper, Sidney Gross.

"At 2 P.M. on September 21, a light southeast breeze sprung up. At 2:15 P.M. it was so hazy I started sounding the fog signal. By 3 P.M. it was blowing a gale so hard that I could not open any door because the wind pushed me back into the room. Assistant Keeper Bennett tried too, but failed. We were absolutely helpless to save anything outside. At 4:00 P.M. the platform encircling the outside of the tower was torn from its fastenings and carried away along with a 12' rowboat. Dozens of the breakwater rocks surrounding the light, some weighing several tons, were carried away as far as 60 feet.

The wind then shifted from southeast to southwest, (typical hurricane counter-clockwise behavior). At 5:00 P.M. the water was even with the deck and waves were pounding so hard that all boards were torn out and all glass smashed in. Tons of seawater poured in. The light lens was shaking so badly I expected it to break into pieces. At 6:00 P.M. water was pouring through the second story window. Everything outside the building was now carried away, and I certainly did not expect to see another sunrise. But daylight did come at last and it was like a dream. There was nothing around the tower. Everything else was gone."

Keepers Gross and Bennett, though fearing for their lives, manned their post and kept the light going all night while the world around them was being destroyed.

Moral: The next time you see one of those Saybrook Breakwater Light license plates, be reminded that, while Long Island Sound usually looks like a peaceful inland lake, it can be quite dangerous; the Connecticut coast can often be lashed by fast-moving storms and hammered by destructive seas. So, play it safe, boys and girls! If in doubt, don't go! Tomorrow's another day.

Editor's Note: Saybrook Breakwater Light, (the "Outer Light"), was constructed in 1886 at a cost of \$20,000 to warn mariners of the sandbars lying to the east and west. It is 49 feet high and resembles Stamford Harbor Light. It was originally fitted with a fifth order Fresnel lens exhibiting a fixed white light with a red sector. In 1889 it was equipped with a huge 1000 lb. fog bell, but the sound was so objected to by local residents that it was reduced to a 250 lb. bell that was subsequently replaced by a foghorn.



Atmospheric conditions made it difficult to hear this horn very far at sea, so in 1936 two powerful diaphragm horns were installed. In 1959 the Light was automated and its Fresnel lens replaced by a modern 300 mm optic. In the summer of 1996 the Coast Guard spent \$64,000 to paint the lighthouse and remove a 500-gallon fuel tank and generator. The Light is still an active aid to navigation, flashing a green light every six seconds with a fog signal of one blast every 30 seconds.

A second light, Lynde Point Light, (the "Inner Light"), was constructed in 1803 at the north end of the west breakwater. A 35-foot wooden structure, it was not tall enough. In 1838 a masonry 65' lighthouse, resembling New London Harbor Light and New Haven Five Mile Point Light, was built. Automated in 1978, it shows a fixed white light. Coming in from sea, line up the two lights as a range and you will have a clean shot for the channel. (Be sure to keep the two lights to port).

It is with sadness that we have just received word of the loss of Past Commander Heber Ives Thayer, Jr., Commander of Saybrook Power Squadron, 1959/1960. "Joe" passed away July 7, 2010 after a brief illness at Chestelm Rehabilitation Center in Moodus, CT. A celebration of his life was held Friday July 16, 2010 at the Clinton Congregational Church. Joe achieved his license as a ship's captain and mastered not only Connecticut waters but those in Palm Bay, Florida where he resided in later years. He is survived by two sons, Brian E. Thayer of Higganum, and Michael I. Thayer of Clinton.



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The Outer Light

Copy deadline is the Wednesday after the first Tuesday of each month. Articles from members are welcome, subject to editing for clarity and availability of space.

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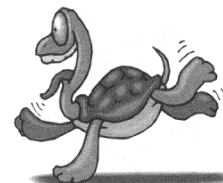
* Generous Donation

Please send your \$10.00 tax-deductible donation to Saybrook Sail & Power Squadron, c/o Paul J. Forrest, Treasurer, 124 River Road, Essex, CT 06426

To Our Outer Light Patrons: We thank you all for your annual support to help offset our printing and mailing costs. A new Outer Light patron year has commenced (July 2010 —June 2011). Our treasurer is standing by to process your donation, and will be most appreciative of hearing from you.

Happy Birthday!

- 9/3 Jeffrey Johnson
- 9/6 James Matthew
- 9/18 Elaine Kyle
- 9/23 James Tryon



Ethanol (Continued from Page 4)

would be less prone to phase separation than E-10 since the additional alcohol would absorb more water. That's the good news. But—the bad news— adding more ethanol raises other issues with materials compatibility: elastomers, plastics, and metals may be affected because alcohol is more corrosive than gasoline, and engines have only been tested with E-10. Also, adding oxygen in the fuel may cause the engine to run hotter, especially if a computer does not control combustion.

Lew Gibbs says the best way to prevent phase separation in E-10 is to “keep it dry, keep it dry, keep it dry.” That means keeping the tank filled to prevent condensation.

Dangerous Waves

(Courtesy of the National Safe Boating Council)

Each year, boaters encounter waves that cause significant damage to their vessels, or result in a sinking and loss of life. To keep safe, boaters need to understand how waves are formed, when they can become steep, and the type of wave conditions that their vessels can handle.

Wind creates waves, and they are influenced by the size and duration (timing) of the wind fetch. (Fetch is the distance the wave travels.) Waves generated locally are called “wind waves”, and those that are generated at a distance are called “swells”. These waves are further modified by currents, refraction, (deflection from a straight path), and shoaling, (becoming shallow in depth).

Ultimately, steep waves create many problems for mariners operating boats of all shapes and sizes. Steep waves are those with wave heights that are nearly equal to their wave period. (“wave period” is the period of time before reoccurrence.) Steep waves create hazardous navigation conditions that can be compounded by tidal currents near bars, inlets, or port entrances.

When waves are expected to become large or steep, boaters should strongly consider remaining in port until conditions improve. If you encounter steep or large waves, point the bow of the boat into the waves. Never ride parallel to the waves during these conditions or you run the risk of overturning your boat.

Always make sure that you and your crew are wearing properly fitted and U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets.



Directions to the Stony Creek Dock for the Thimble Island Cruise

From NYC AREA: Take 1-95 to exit 56, right turn at the ramp. Proceed two miles to a stop sign. Proceed straight toward the shore, going under a railroad trestle. Follow signs to Stony Creek Town Dock.

From OUR AREA: Take 1-95 to exit 56. Make left at the light. Proceed to next light and take a left. Proceed straight toward shore, going under railroad trestle. Follow signs to Stony Creek Town Dock.

Coming Events Highlights

11 September, Saturday

D1 Poker Run/Rendezvous
Hamburg Cove, Lyme

See Page 3 and latest edition of *Sounds of 1*

18 September, Saturday

SSPS *Volsunga IV*
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Stony Creek, CT
Please see Page 3

Issue 8 – September 2010

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