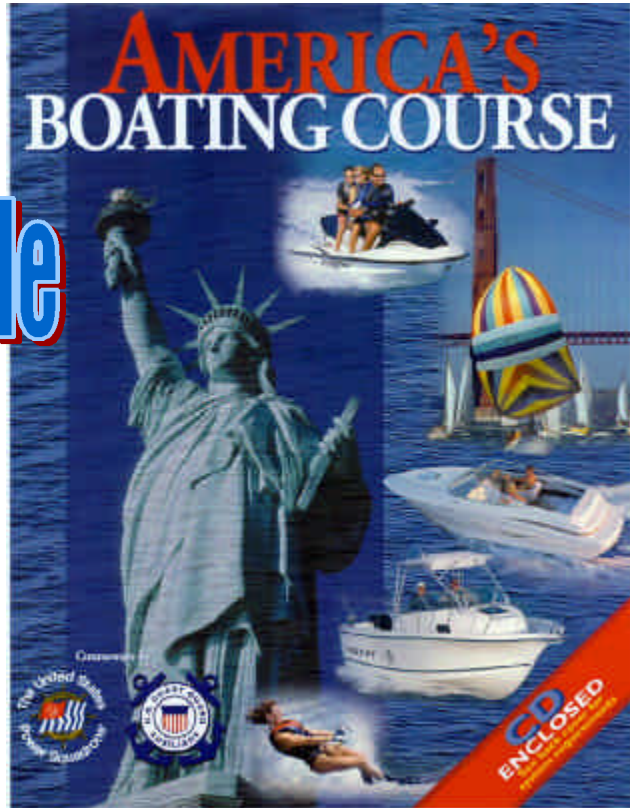


# Squadron Guide



# America's Boating Course



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## Squadron Guide to America's Boating Course

### Introduction

The United States Power Squadrons and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary are introducing America's Boating Course. This is a professionally produced course, which consists of an 80-page full color manual and a CD-ROM containing interactive courseware and information for the boater. In addition, students may sign-up on America's Boating Course Web site and start taking the course immediately. The primary market for America's Boating Course probably includes:

- (a) boaters who live too far away from a traditional classroom course location;
- (b) boaters whose work schedule and/or home life demands make it impractical for them to attend classes;
- (c) non-traditional boaters (e.g., anglers, hunters, paddleboaters); and
- (d) boaters who are internet-focused and/or who are "turned off" by traditional classroom courses."

The objectives for America's Boating Course within USPS are:

Increase the number of citizens who have been educated in the basics of safe boating.

Increase public awareness of our organization.

Establish a relationship between students and our squadrons.

Increase USPS membership.

Initially, the course will be offered for sale by:

Logging on to the web site ([www.AmericasBoatingCourse.com](http://www.AmericasBoatingCourse.com))  
Calling 1-866-BOAT ABC (1-866-262-8222)  
Squadrons and flotillas

Other sales channels such as marine retail stores are being pursued.

NASBLA has approved the course and has granted the PWC endorsement. Both USPS and CGAUX are offering to provide the student with state specific information and a proctored examination. Passing the course examination satisfies the USPS educational requirement for membership.

## Squadron Guide to America's Boating Course

### **Squadron Sales**

America's Boating Course is available to squadrons as another Educational Department Course and can be found in the Educational Department Catalog. The price to squadrons is \$17.50. With the newly enacted changes to our Governing Board policy, squadrons may set the price as they see fit. Manufacturers suggested retail price for the course is \$34.95

Students will expect to receive state specific information from the squadron and a squadron contact should be provided for each sale. In addition to providing state specific info, the contact should be available to field the student's questions and to schedule the proctored exam upon completion. Squadrons may charge an examination fee to cover the cost of administering exams.

Where and when a squadron sells America's Boating Course is a squadron decision. A squadron may choose to use the course as a fundraiser and set up a booth at local boat shows (if permitted) and offer the course. Or a squadron may choose to offer the course to those who want to take a boating course "right now" when the squadron does not have one scheduled in the near future. America's Boating Course is another educational tool for the squadron.

### **Other Sales**

As stated earlier, additional sales channels will be available to purchase America's Boating Course. If the student elects to make the purchase through one of these other avenues, one of our objectives is to establish a personal relationship between a squadron and the student.

If we are successful in establishing this relationship, we will have the opportunity to provide them with the information necessary to be a safe boater and the opportunity to tell them about the benefits of membership in USPS. This opportunity will be in the form of person to person communications rather than instructor to class communications.

A system is being put in place, which will notify both organizations (USPS and CGAUX) each time there is a new ABC student. To ensure that we put the student in touch with the "right squadron" we are establishing ABC Coordinators in each district that will receive the notification and assign the new student to one of the squadrons within their district. The squadron will then contact the student, introduce themselves and their squadron, offer to provide state specific information and (when the time is right) to administer an exam. Of course while we (USPS) are doing this, the CGAUX will be doing the same thing. Therefore, it is a race. Not only do we want to be there first; we want to be selected as the best for the job.

## Squadron Guide to America's Boating Course

### **Student Contact**

The ideal "ABC student contact" knows all about the specifics of state boating laws, likes people, wants to help, and knows how to "sell their squadron". Lacking all these capabilities, probably the most important skills are those involving people. If the student feels that the contact is someone who wants to help and is capable of providing that help, your squadron will be viewed as an attractive resource.

While we normally encounter state specific questions within the classroom, in the case of America's Boating Course we need to provide the student with information so that they are prepared for the unique requirements of the state where they do their boating. This information may take the form of a state-supplied booklet or the web address for state boating regulations. It is important that the student contact have access to this information.

Since the student contact is probably the first USPS member the student will meet, it is important that the first impression be a good one. To make that first impression the best one possible, each student contact should have a "script" for that first contact. Emphasize the fact that the student contact is there to help and be sure to offer more information about squadron activities and education opportunities.

Once contact has been established, it is important that the "student contact" report the fact. This contact report is used by the system to turn off the reminder notices, which ensure that students are contacted. The "new student" message contains the students name, address, phone number, e-mail address (optional), a Student PIN and a web site address (URL).

To make the report:

- 1) go to web site specified in the message
- 2) enter the student pin & retrieve the students contact record
- 3) enter the contact's name, e-mail address, phone number, and date of contact

This information is used to provide the student with a means to reach the local contact if he/she should lose the information provided. It will not be used in any other way.

### **Student Exams**

Examinations for ABC students should be administered in much the same manner as any of our boating courses (refer to Exam Instructions in following section). NASBLA certification requires that we include state specific questions, when provided, for all boating courses. The ABC student should be tested with

## Squadron Guide to America's Boating Course

the same state specific questions used when examining Boating Course or Boat Smart students.

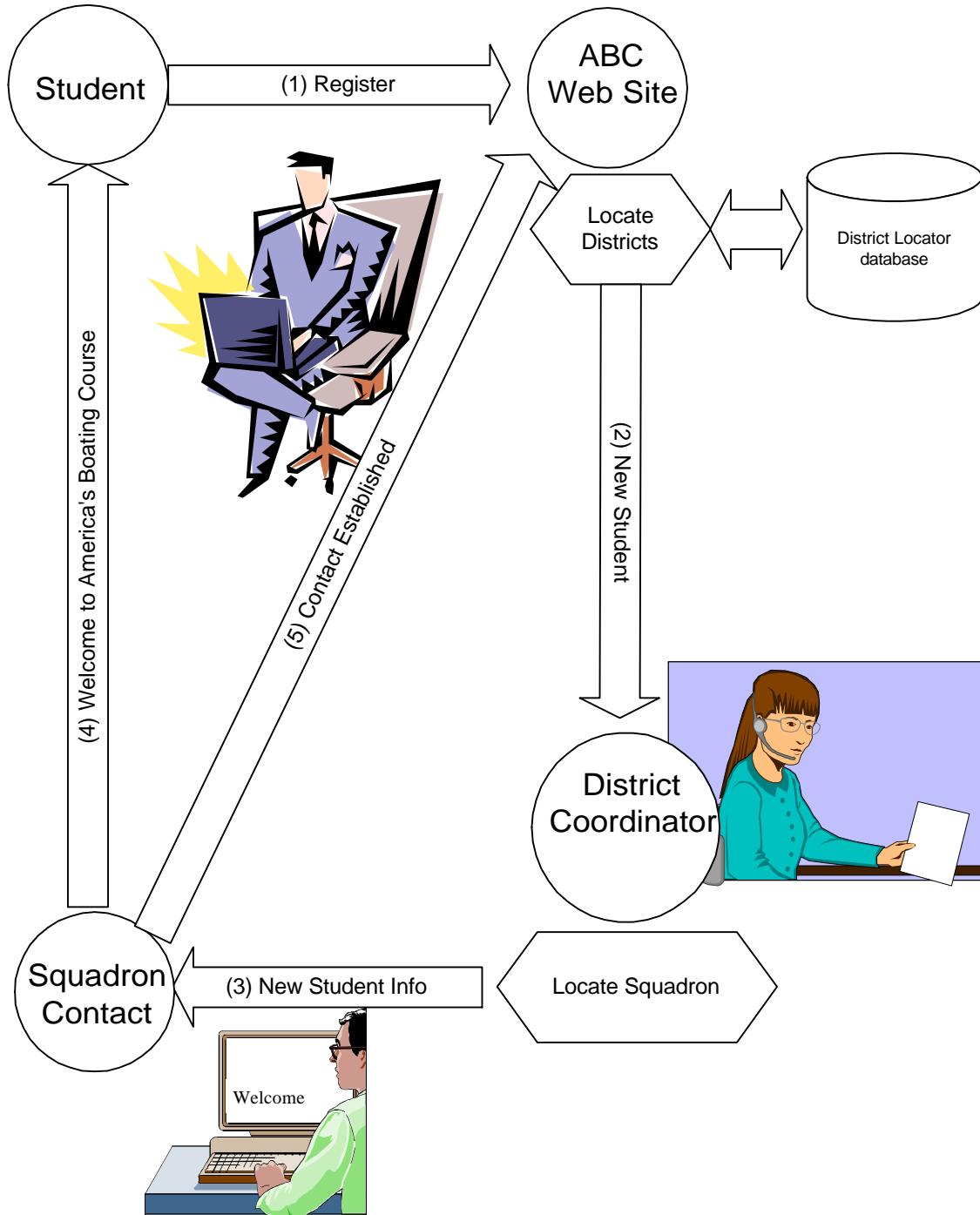
Copies of America's Boating Course which are not sold by a squadron or flotilla will have a "Purchase Validation Sticker" attached to the CD envelope. A unique "validation number" will be printed on a tear-off tab for each sticker. Space will be provided on the answer sheet for entering this "validation number". When a student turns in the exam, the squadron must collect the tag from the student, verify that the answer sheet validation number matches the tag and then destroy the tag. When the answer sheet is processed at HQ, those with correct validation numbers will result in a \$5 credit for the squadron that administered the exam. If someone shows up for an exam without a tag, the squadron won't get a \$5 credit for that exam. Squadrons will not get a \$5 credit if the number is bogus or is a duplicate of one already used.

When the exam is given is a matter of scheduling between the squadron and the student. If the squadron has a class, which will be taking their final exam in the near term, the squadron may ask the student to come and be tested with the class. America's Boating Course has its' own exam so the ABC student will be given a different exam. If there are no classes underway, the examiner may ask the student to come to an agreed upon location for the exam. Or, if it is convenient, the examiner may choose to administer the exam at the student's home. Flexibility is the key.

The exam for America's Boating Course is similar in format to the BoatSmart exam and each exam booklet includes exam instructions. Each student takes the same exam (exams are not random). ABC exams and the answer key may be ordered from the Educational Department Catalog. The exam should be graded and the results provided as soon as the student completes answering the questions. A grade of 80% or greater is considered passing.

### Establishing Contact

The process of establishing contact between an America's Boating Course student and a local squadron requires a network. The network is comprised of the ABC Web Site, District Coordinators in each of our 33 districts, and Squadron Contacts in our 450+ squadrons.



## Exam Instructions

# United States Power Squadrons®

# AMERICA'S BOATING COURSE<sup>SM</sup>

## Proctored Closed Book Examination

*Please Do Not Write In The Examination Booklet.*

This examination is to be taken under the supervision of a member of the United States Power Squadrons or other designated exam administrator. While taking the examination, you may not consult other students, books, notes, or other reference material. You may ask the examiner to clarify a question if you feel it is unclear. A pencil and eraser are the only tools needed. The examination consists of:

1. This examination booklet containing 50 multiple-choice questions.
2. An answer sheet for recording answers and the student's personal data.
3. Supplemental state or local government examination questions, if applicable. (If such state or local questions are provided, up to 10 of them may be substituted for the same number of questions of this examination, substituting only for questions 41-50, as specified by the exam administrator.)

You must answer 80% of the questions correctly to pass the examination. All questions have equal point value. (For example, on a 50-question examination you must answer at least 40 questions correctly to pass.) Additionally, some states may require that a percentage of their specific questions be answered correctly to qualify for a state certificate.

There are no trick questions. There is only one correct answer to each multiple-choice question. No credit can be given if more than one answer is marked on the answer sheet for any question. Be sure to erase completely any answer you may wish to change.

Use only the answer sheet provided. Fill in the answer circle completely for each question, like this ●, using a #2 black pencil. Use answer blanks 1-50 for the questions in this booklet. If you are given supplemental state or local questions, use answer blanks starting with 41 for those questions, substituting up to 10 state or local questions for the same number of questions in this booklet. The total examination must include at least 50 questions.

Check to make sure that all personal data are filled in on the answer sheet, including last name, first name, middle initial, and — if you would like USPS to record your successful completion of this course in its permanent headquarters records — your address, phone number, exam date, and date and state of birth. Your exam administrator will give you the squadron identification number.

When you complete this examination, please turn in your examination answer sheet and this examination booklet to the exam administrator.

*The Content of This Examination is Confidential.*

## Squadron Guide to America's Boating Course

### **These instructions appear following question #40:**

#### ***ABC Examination - Additional state or local government-required questions, if applicable:***

*The first 40 questions above must be included in the final examination whether or not there are any state or local government-required questions. If state or local government questions are provided by your exam administrator, up to 10 such questions may be substituted for the same number of questions in this examination in the sequence of questions #41 to #50. Your exam administrator will give you specific instructions on this.*

*If there are 10 or more state or local government questions, the first 10 of those may be substituted for questions #41 to #50 in this exam; any over 10 must be added to the end of this examination. If there are fewer than 10 state or local government questions, substitute for a like number of the last questions in this examination. For example, if there are five state or local government questions, substitute them for the last five questions of this examination (#46 through #50); or, if there are eight state or local government questions, substitute them for the last eight questions of this examination (#43 through #50). The total examination, including any state or local government questions, must total at least 50 questions.*

*If there are no state or local government questions provided, continue with questions #41 through #50, below.*

## Squadron Guide to America's Boating Course

### Welcome Aboard Template

The initial contact is important and we want to be sure that we convey a consistent message. We also want the message to be accurate for the location where it is delivered. The following template can serve as the starting point for your squadrons Welcome Aboard message. The **red text** indicates text which you must provide for your location. This will also indicate text to include only if conditions warrant. For example, if your squadron is located in a state which requires state specific questions on the exam, then your squadron would include the text designated by **<state questions: >**. The template is a tool, modify it to compose your squadron's message. Just be sure it's accurate.

### CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME ABOARD

Congratulations on your purchase of America's Boating Course, a joint venture of United States Power Squadrons® (USPS) and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCGAux).

Welcome Aboard to what we hope is only the beginning of your safe boating education. America's Boating Course provides the educational foundation, which is essential to making your boating experience enjoyable and safe. Upon this foundation, you will add the rules and regulations specific to **<state name>** and when you have mastered these, you will be ready to take our proctored examination.

**<state questions:** This exam will cover all material covered in the course as well as the state specific information.>

**<no state questions:** This exam will cover all material covered in the course.>

The course has been approved by the National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and is recognized by the U. S. Coast Guard.

When you pass the examination, you will receive America's Boating Course Certificate of Completion and a wallet card showing that you have successfully completed this NASBLA approved course.

**<state recognition:** This will qualify you for a **<state name>** Safe Boating Education Certificate.>

My name is **<squadron contact name>** and I am a member of **<squadron name>** Power Squadron, a unit of United States Power Squadrons, sail & power boating. I will be your Squadron Contact for the America's Boating Course. I am available via email to answer any questions you may have regarding the course material and I will also give

## Squadron Guide to America's Boating Course

you information on state specific boating laws; all geared to make you feel confident and ready for the exams. When that time comes, we will schedule your exam.

Completion of the proctored exam for America's Boating Course meets the educational requirements for membership in the United States Power Squadrons. Apprentice membership is provided for younger boaters (12 - 18) and there are several membership options for adults (18 or over). Courses for members include: Seamanship, Piloting, Advanced Piloting, Junior Navigation, Navigation, Weather, Sail, Marine Electronics, Engine Maintenance, Cruise Planning and Instructor Qualification.

For more information about the United States Power Squadrons, please log on to our National web site at: <http://www.usps.org>.

<district web site: For more information about District <district number>, USPS, please log onto our District web site at: < district web site URL>.>

<squadron web site: To learn more about <squadron name> Power Squadron, visit our web site at: <squadron web site URL>.>

Please save this Email note for future reference.

<squadron contact name>  
<squadron contact e-mail address>

## Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the price of *America's Boating Course*?

A: Manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$34.95.

Q: Will USPS HQ accept credit cards for ABC orders?

A: Yes, for individual orders, but not for bulk orders at the squadron price.

Q: What is the price of the exam?

A: That is a decision for the squadron to make. On the kits squadrons sell directly, you can establish a selling price that includes the costs you wish to recover in whatever way you want to do that. On kits that are not sold by the squadrons or flotillas, there will be a validation coupon that provides a \$5 credit to the squadron administering the exam and returning an exam sheet with the validation number. There will be only one credit per validation number and there will not be a credit for bogus numbers.

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Q: Must an individual purchase the course material in order to take an exam?

A: National has no requirement that a student purchase course material in order to take an exam. Squadrons may set whatever rules they wish — squadron option.

Q: Is there a fee for additional Proctored Examinations for family members using a single manual or for those retaking the test?

A: That is a decision for the squadron to make.

Q: Does passing the USPS ABC examination meet the educational requirements for USPS membership?

A: Yes.

Q. Does the CD-ROM support the Macintosh?

A. Yes. System requirements to use the courseware are on the back of the manual and will be on the web site. The CD does not autoloading on a Mac, but the directions for installing are in the readme.txt file on the CD.

Q: Since ABC is NASBLA approved, can we tout reduced insurance rates?

A: Insurance companies individually decide on what basis discounts are provided. Companies may specify NASBLA approved courses, organizations, e.g., USPS, CGAux, Red Cross, or the specific course. ABC is NASBLA approved and is both a USPS and CGAux course. For any company that accepts *Boat Smart*, ABC should qualify for reduced rates because the content is equivalent to *Boat Smart*. Once the courseware is available, the information on discounts should become available. Meanwhile, check with the insurance company involved.

Q: What is the proper way to designate the trademark status of "*America's Boating Course*"?

A: Until notified otherwise, use the symbol <sup>SM</sup> the first time it is used in a document or flyer—*America's Boating Course*<sup>SM</sup>.

Q: Squadrons are supposed to "report contact". When should this report be made?

A: Consider contact to be made as soon you send the Congratulations and Welcome Aboard message or following a phone call to the student. The primary reason for making the report is to notify the system that someone will be there for the new student.

# **Joint USPS/USCGAux Electronic Boating Safety Course**

## **International Boating and Water Safety Summit Address**

**To introduce America's Boating Course, V/C Jim Roeber delivered the following speech at the International Boating and Water Safety Summit in Nashville, TN on 11 April 2001.**

Good morning. Thank you for being here.

You know all too well that boating accidents and boating deaths respect no geographic or political boundaries. Boating accidents occur in every state in the union. Boating deaths occur in every state in the union.

You also know that boating accidents and boating deaths respect no shorelines. From the smallest fishing ponds and streams to the largest lakes and rivers, from the coastal waters C the east, west, south, and north coasts of America C to the open oceans and gulfs, we see the same kinds of accidents. Capsizings, collisions with other vessels and objects, falls overboard, fires, groundings C we all know the litany. We see it everywhere. The numbers change a little from year to year, but the main cause of boating accidents C approximately three-fourths of all accidents C remains the same C operator error.

You know as well as we that every type and style of boat C from the one-person canoe, kayak, or rowboat to personal watercraft, from bass boats to ski boats, from runabouts to houseboats, from day-sailers to coastal yachts of every make C all have been involved in accidents. Clearly there are boat-related or equipment-related or even environment-related causes of accidents. But it mostly still comes down to the operator. The Coast Guard cites factors like operator inattention, careless or reckless operation, operator inexperience, operating at an unsafe speed, and no proper lookout. These are all operator-controllable factors.

If we are to make a truly major improvement in boating accident statistics and slash the number of boating-related deaths, we need to address the root of the problem C the boat operator. Coast Guard data clearly show, and common sense tells us, that educated boaters are safer boaters. Our challenge C yours and ours C is to make effective basic boating safety education available and appealing to boaters of every stripe, in every venue across America.

A large percentage of boating accidents and fatalities involve people who do not consider themselves Aboaters@in the traditional sense. Many of these are new to boating or are using craft that do not look or feel like traditional boats. Many others view their craft as merely a means of transportation to get to where their main interests lie C a favorite fishing hole, a duck blind, or a dive site. To get basic boating safety education to them, we need to approach them on their grounds, not ours.

The United States Power Squadrons, for more than 85 years, and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, for more than 60 years, have been offering high quality basic boating safety education

## Joint USPS/USCGAux Electronic Boating Safety Course

courses. These courses have been given mostly in a classroom setting. They have tended to cluster in larger communities near major boating waters C areas large enough to support a local flotilla or squadron. And, they have been geared primarily to the needs and interests of what most of us would consider traditional boaters.

But that's no longer good enough. We need to continue serving that market, but we also need to reach out to those other boaters C to the ones who won't, for personal reasons, or who can't, for work, distance, or travel reasons, attend a classroom course; to the many who live too far away to attend a current course; to those whose life style calls for a different type of learning experience. NASBLA has asked us to help reach those literally millions of other boaters whom we've been missing all these years.

Before we address our next, joint step in meeting this challenge, we need to look at the certification demands of more and more states. In every state in America, if you want to get an automobile driver's license, you must show up in person and take a test under the watchful eye of an agency employee. You can't take the test home and bring it back completed next week. If you are called on to demonstrate your driving skills to an examiner, you are the one who must sit behind the wheel and operate the vehicle. Your Mom or your cousin can't take these tests for you. The state agency wants to be sure that you personally know the basic traffic laws and rules of the road.

By the same token, those states that are calling for the passing of a basic boating safety examination before issuing a state boating certificate or license are more and more requiring a proctored examination C especially where interstate reciprocity is involved. Just as with a car, they want to be sure that you personally C not just your Mom or your cousin C know the basic boating laws and rules of the road. Every United States Coast Guard Auxiliary boating safety course and every United States Power Squadrons boating safety course, including the new course we are introducing today, requires the passing of a proctored examination to receive a completion certificate. Every State Boating Law Administrator, every law enforcement officer, can rest assured that the person whose name appears on that certificate is the same person who took and passed our examination.

Today we are proud to introduce to you ***America's Boating Course***.<sup>®</sup> It is offered as a joint product of the United States Power Squadrons and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. ***America's Boating Course*** is a modern, multi-media, boating safety education course designed to reach every boater in America. It is, of course, NASBLA-approved. It will be offered both on-line via the world-wide web and in a CD-Rom format available from the USCGAux, from USPS, and through numerous marine stores. In both venues, the electronic courseware is augmented by an 80-page printed manual. We believe that the learning should go on even after the computer is turned off. The manual further provides a handy reference guide aboard even the smallest boat.

We are also proud to salute the two outstanding vendors who have helped develop the course and courseware materials for ***America's Boating Course***. The course manual was prepared for us by Boat Ed of Dallas, TX. These are the folks whose own fine course, ***ABoat***

## Joint USPS/USCGAux Electronic Boating Safety Course

*America*® and its various derivatives, is being used by more and more states for their own course offerings. The *America's Boating Course* manual is based on Boat Ed's *Boat America*, supplemented with approximately 20% additional material from other USPS and USCGAux courses. The electronic courseware for *America's Boating Course* is being developed for us by ISI, Information Spectrum, Inc., of Annandale, VA. ISI is a leader in interactive electronic training and education, having developed many highly sophisticated training programs for the military and private agencies. As you will see, the interactive electronic courseware and the manual complement each other very effectively, thanks largely to the close cooperation of both Boat Ed and ISI.

An important feature of *America's Boating Course* is that it stresses boating safety education. This is not a course designed just to let someone answer a series of test questions. The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary and the United States Power Squadrons believe in teaching concepts as well as facts. We teach for understanding, not memorization. We believe that this better prepares a boater to face some unexpected circumstance. We strive to make safe boating practices a habit and natural response of every recreational boater we educate.

As you will see in a few moments, the interactive nature of our electronic courseware draws the student right into the learning process. The student is working, one-on-one, with the computer as his or her private virtual instructor.® The student is much more actively involved with *America's Boating Course* instruction than is someone sitting in a lecture classroom environment or taking a distance-learning course via TV. Additionally, each student will be provided the name and number of a local squadron or flotilla member who will be available to answer questions, provide extra tutoring, and administer a final proctored exam. For those entities that may require eight hours of classroom instruction, the interactive electronic courseware of *America's Boating Course* measures up fully. This will prove particularly valuable in more-remote areas where no traditional classes are even offered. *America's Boating Course* will bring the equivalent of expert instructor-led classes anywhere in the world.

The balance of this presentation will feature an on-screen demonstration of a few segments of *America's Boating Course*. We're just going to sample a few of the many topics covered to give you a feel for the unique interactive nature of our course. At the end of this seminar, we will be pleased to give each of you a pre-release copy of the *America's Boating Course* manual. *America's Boating Course* will be released to the public this Summer. Welcome to the future of basic boating safety education.

By: Jim Roeber, USPS

IBWSS - Nashville, TN - 11 April 2001