

# Currents

United States Power Squadrons® Educational Department

V/C Spencer P. Anderson, SN — NEO

R/C Richard E. Kyle, SN — ANEO

## The Latest on USPS® Education

### Seamanship Course Update

The 4 June 2005 issue of *Currents* generally described the coming changes in the *Seamanship* course. This will be an update on our progress to keep you informed.

In an integrating process, Educational Department members met following the Spring Governing Board in Charlotte to review the storyboards for both the new public *Boating* and new *Seamanship* courses. This was an effort to compare the objectives of both courses and then map a common strategy. Our intent is to eliminate duplication and also create a smooth transition from *Boating* to *Seamanship*. Your Boat Handling Committee is also developing the *Seamanship* course to bridge content to the current *Piloting* course.

*Seamanship* will pick up content where the *Boating* course leaves off and provide additional and amplified material designed to assist the recreational boater in becoming a better educated, more knowledgeable and safer boater.

Many members have expressed the desire to sit for the U.S. Coast Guard license examination. BHCom has listened and included this path as an option in the new *Seamanship* course design.

Committee members are presently in the data collection and organization mode that will result in a student

See *Seamanship*, Page 3

### Development of New *Boating* Course Underway

The technical writing of the next generation in public boating education is underway. This new course will replace *Boating* in 2007, but the first part will be available next year to replace the current *Boat Smart*. This new two-part course has a fresh flow and extensive graphics. It embraces all types of boaters from paddlers to yachtsmen and is based on modern technology and current information.

The new *Boating* will replace *Boat Smart*®, *The Squadron Boating Course*, and *Chart Smart*®. Its core material is largely based on the current *Squadron Boating Course*, but rearranged, trimmed and refined with new content and a more graphic format. The presentation PowerPoint® CD will be top quality and incorporate animation and video segments to explain the more complex topics.

The first part of the new course covers basic boating safety and seamanship, and satisfies the requirements of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) for certification. The second part introduces boaters to the modern tools of piloting and navigation. The Spanish/English version will provide parallel columns with both languages side-by-side for our growing Hispanic audience.

Part one, targeted for beta testing in 2006, will have four sections, each designed to be taught in a two hour session. It will lead naturally and seamlessly into the new enhanced *Seamanship* course now under development which will pick up where *Boating* leaves off. The second part of the new public boating course, targeted for 2007, will incorporate even more electronic navigation and include an upgraded Maptech® CD-ROM with additional digital charts.

The part one draft is approximately half complete, and we are now incorporating graphics and photographs. We concluded that photos and videos can be very helpful in explaining key points. Extensive beta testing is planned to assure that the proper mix of graphics, photos, and videos are included. You too can be a contributor and find your work in print. We need your digital pictures of typical recreational boating situations. Pictures of buoys, bridges, locks, types of boats, etc. are still needed for the PowerPoint presentations. Maximum camera resolution is preferred. Email your pictures to:

[BPECom@gmail.com](mailto:BPECom@gmail.com)

Our current courses are still the best on the market, and we're upgrading the presentation and support material to help you. This fall, a new Maptech CD

See *Boating*, Page 2

## Meet Our HQ Staff

Odile Fredericks joined *THE ENSIGN*<sup>®</sup> staff as a copy editor in 2004. A writer and editor with 20 years' experience working for magazines and newspapers, she graduated with a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri in Columbia and a bachelor's degree in mass communications from St. John's University in New York.



Odile Fredericks joined *THE ENSIGN*<sup>®</sup> staff as a copy editor in 2004. A writer and editor with 20 years' experience working for magazines and newspapers, she graduated with a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri in Columbia and a bachelor's degree in mass communications from St. John's University in New York.

Sudha Soora has been the Art Director for *THE ENSIGN* since 1994. She and her husband, Gopal, love to travel and enjoy taking photographs, some of which have appeared in the magazine. She likes to paint in watercolor and acrylic media.



Sudha Soora has been the Art Director for *THE ENSIGN* since 1994. She and her husband, Gopal, love to travel and enjoy taking photographs, some of which have appeared in the magazine. She likes to paint in watercolor and acrylic media.

---

### From *Boating*, Page 1

with expanded chart coverage in the Great Lakes and Northwest will be shipped with *The Squadron Boating Course* and *Chart Smart*. A revised presentation CD for the *Boating Course* was provided to all DEOs at the recent Spring Governing Board meeting. They will be duplicating their copy and distributing to the SEOs in their district. This enhanced CD will make the introduction of the digital chart material easier and more exciting.

We will be conducting beta tests of the new Boating '07 part one material starting in early 2006. The present edition of *Boat Smart* will be used until beta testing confirms that the new course is ready to go. And, *The Squadron Boating Course* will be used well into 2007. So, continue ordering and teaching the present courses – *they are simply without peers.*

## Ed Dept Web Site Being Redesigned

Redesign of the Educational Department web pages has been needed for quite some time. As more and more material was made available via the web pages, those pages grew in complexity and loading times, making it more difficult to quickly locate an item in which a member was interested. After studying web site design books and other web sites, as well as getting USPS member inputs on the shortcomings of the current web pages, a redesign of the web site has begun.

While the current pages are oriented toward the Educational Department organizational structure, namely toward the ten committees that comprise the Educational Department, the new web pages will be oriented toward satisfying user needs for materials and course questions. Each of the pages will be broken into smaller segments to make loading faster, and better navigation links will be provided to make it easier to move around as desired. Goals are to meet some rules of thumb such as no more than 8 seconds to load a page (including graphics) over a dial-up connection, and finding what you're looking for with three clicks. While it may not be possible to meet these goals in all cases, that is the intent of the redesign.

Implementation of the redesigned department pages has begun in earnest, but there are over 1500 files that need to be reviewed, analyzed, and possibly restructured to make the new site work. This will probably put completion of the redesigned web site out until about the end of the year.

While all this is going on, there is also another effort underway to revitalize the entire USPS web site. That effort will attempt to provide uniformity across all the USPS departmental web pages, and this could also impact the Educational Department web pages down the line. The Educational Department is very involved with this effort as well, and is one of the major players on the ad hoc committee doing the work.

If you have any substantial inputs to provide on either the Educational Department web pages or any of the other USPS web pages, please don't hesitate to contact the EdDept webmasters at:

[eddept-webmaster@usps.org](mailto:eddept-webmaster@usps.org)

---

## **NEW! - Discount Marine Bookstore for Members**

Your educational department has opened a deep discount marine bookstore. At prices below what you pay elsewhere, our recommended titles cover the gamut of boating activities.

These are books that you will want to read and own, or give as gifts to fellow boaters. McGraw-Hill, which hosts the store, is the leading publisher of boating titles including several USPS Guides written by USPS authors that are now in the works. *Marine Amateur Radio* is already on bookshelves.

Just go to the Educational Department main page, accessed via [www.usps.org](http://www.usps.org), and click on the icon. This will take you to the member sign-on, requiring your certificate number and zip code. You then will be directed to the store where you can place your orders for direct shipment.

## ***Marine Electronics is Getting a New Look***

The *Marine Electronics* course is undergoing a revision to put the course back into one book with three sections. These will be Boat Electric Systems, Marine Communications, and Navigational Electronics. We'll then have one examination for the *Marine Electronics* course.

What is presently *ME 103, Electronics for Navigation*, will be completely rewritten as a Student Guide supported by a stand alone reference manual. This manual will be developed for all courses in the Educational Department that include electronic tools in their course material.

The title for the reference book is under consideration, but for now we choose to call it *The Boat Owner's Guide for Electronics*. It will function as a reference similar to the way *Weekend Navigator* is used in *Piloting* and *Advanced Piloting*. This reference will contain in-depth material on all aspects of how to use and maintain the various electronic tools available.

A project team representing members from many course committees within the Educational Department met in Florida the weekend of 6 August 2005 to finalize a story board that will be used in developing the reference book.

The Canadian Sail and Power Squadrons has shown interest in this project as a joint effort between USPS and CPS, and sent a representative as a member of the project team. This is another first within the Educational Department because we have actively begun a major joint program with CPS that fulfills the agreements of the Memorandum of Understanding we have with them.

A completed draft of the new electronic navigation reference book is projected for the Annual Meeting in January 2006.

From *Seamanship*, Page 1

manual organized into nine chapters designed to be taught in ten weeks or less. The chapters are:

- Before You Go
- The Boat
- While You Are on the Water
- Slow Speed Maneuvering
- Anchoring, Mooring and Rafting
- General Boat Handling
- Emergencies Afloat
- Marlinespike
- Navigational Rules

The USCG license material will be included in a supplemental section since it is strictly optional.

Members who complete *Seamanship* will be prepared both for the enjoyment of recreational boating and to move on to the excellent advanced grade and elective courses we offer. As students proceed through *Seamanship* they will find ties and references to nearly every USPS course. Our timeline is to beta test the new *Seamanship* course this year. We hope to have the course ready for squadron use late next spring.

As the *Seamanship* material is written, it will also be developed as a potential online course. Most colleges and universities have moved to online courses and USPS will explore this method using *Seamanship*. Our intent is to appeal to those members who can not attend a squadron taught course and younger members who may prefer this mode of education.

Although the update is underway as described, please don't hold back teaching *Seamanship* with the current material which is excellent. This course is critical for new member involvement and there is always some uncertainty with publication dates for new material.

---

### **Test Your Knowledge of Marine Electronics**

1. You enter a Bahamian port in your sailboat equipped with a marine VHF radio. As a recreational boater, you will need a station license. T/F
2. In the event of a Mayday situation, you may legally use any type of equipment to communicate your emergency. T/F
3. To terminate a call on a marine radio, you should say \_\_\_\_\_.
4. New VHF marine radios are equipped with something called DSC. DSC stands for Digital \_\_\_\_\_ Calling.
5. The maximum output power allowed for a shipboard VHF marine radio is \_\_\_\_\_ watts.
6. GPS receivers must be initialized when operated for the first time. T/F
7. A waypoint is defined as the direction of the vessel's movement. T/F
8. With an electronic charting system on board your boat there is no need to carry paper charts. T/F
9. The usual two modes of operation for electronic charting systems are local mode and remote mode. T/F
10. On a sailboat, the antenna for a GPS receiver should be mounted as high as possible on the mast in order to get a good steady signal from the GPS satellites. T/F

From *Safe Boating Week*, this page

DEOs should be personally engaged to organize both fall and spring district seminars on how to do this with all the participating departments involved.

**National:** Several national USPS committees will be involved to equip squadrons with an interdepartmental package to coordinate all efforts. These will be from our Ed Dept, PRO/Marketing, VSC, and Membership. A special web site is being considered to help summarize the class schedules for districts and squadrons.

### Answers to Quiz on Page 3

1. **True** — U.S. recreational boaters need both a station license and an operator's permit if they visit a foreign port.
2. **True** — FCC rules permit the use of any communications means and equipment to communicate in an emergency situation.
3. **Over and Out**
4. **Selective**
5. **25 watts** — Most marine VHF radios have a high and low power switch. Although the maximum allowable power is 25 watts, only the amount of power required to successfully communicate should be used.
6. **True** — When turned on for the first time, a GPS receiver must update the almanac in its memory with data received from the satellites as they pass overhead.
7. **False** — A waypoint is defined as the planned destination of a vessel.
8. **False** — Electronic charting equipment is a valuable adjunct to paper charts, not a direct replacement for them.
9. **False** — The two usual modes of operation for electronic charting systems are map mode and cursor mode
10. **False** — On any boat, sail or power, the GPS antenna should be mounted as low as possible that has a clear, unobstructed view of the sky. This is especially true of a sailboat where pitch, roll, and heel can cause a high mounted antenna to lose contact with the transmitting satellites, thus resulting in lost positioning information

## Safe Boating Week 2006 Get Involved

Safe Boating Week 2006 is scheduled for 20 May, Saturday, to 26 May, Friday. As usual, there will be many events surrounding this week as it signals the kick-off of the general recreational boating season. Many districts and squadrons plan local events, press releases and on-the-water contests to highlight this family oriented activity.

For 2006, we are requesting that squadrons try one more activity – and that is to conduct a USPS public boating course during Safe Boating Week. We are planning a coordinated, marketing and public relations blitz across the country to stress the value of taking a safe boating course. At the same time, we are asking every squadron to offer and conduct one of our outstanding basic public courses.

A squadron could elect to conduct a one-day *Boat Smart* program, or to initiate a multi-class program with *Boat Smart* or *The Squadron Boating Course*. Both of these courses are top notch with outstanding graphics and PowerPoint presentations to make them attractive and exciting to the public. *Boat Smart* is typically 8 hours, conducted either as a full-day Saturday program or a 4 session, multi-class program. *The Squadron Boating Course*, typically 12 hours, is best conducted in a multi-class format. The digital charting material included with the *Boating Course* will take an additional class session if covered in its entirety.

**SEOs:** Plan your 2006 public boating calendar to include Safe Boating Week press releases, declarations by local public officials, and the start of one of our courses. Remember that new members come primarily from our public boating course and late spring is a time when new boaters want a course. We need to offer courses then, even if it cuts into our boating time a bit. Squadrons should have S and P courses scheduled for summer or fall so the students can be told about the specific educational opportunities they will have as members. Another prime activities to schedule at the same time are Vessel Safety Checks.

**DEOs:** District sponsored programs are needed to help squadrons plan these events. Squadron PROs need to be given class schedules so they can get them into articles they publish on safe boating week activities, proclamations, etc. Short, train-the-trainer seminars need to be conducted at councils and conferences on the new digital charting material.

See *Safe Boating Week*, this page

**To our readers:** Do you have a USPS® educational success story to share? Perhaps you have suggestions for other articles that would be of interest to your fellow USPS educators. For publication consideration, please send these, preferably by e-mail attachment, to the *Currents* editor:

P/R/C Richard Seibert, SN  
3049 Ravine Way  
Green Bay, WI, 54301-1506  
e-mail: wiswansong@sbcglobal.net