



**BARE COVE SAIL & POWER SQUADRON**  
HINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS  
A Unit of United States Power Squadrons  
H. James Gorman, JN, Educational Officer  
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May 4, 2003

V/C Spencer P. Anderson, SN  
102 Bay Drive North  
Indian Harbor Beach, FL 32937

Re: Boat Smart

Dear V/C Anderson:

Hingham, the "home town" of Bare Cove Sail & Power Squadron, has a population of approximately 22,000, is located 20 miles southeast of Boston, and bordered by similar towns and villages with many equal and substantial attributes. Hingham is not unique in Eastern coastal Massachusetts except, perhaps, to the extent that we possess two rivers, two lakes, nine miles of coastline, a sheltered harbor with eight islands (seven of which are accessible and suitable for picnics or overnight camping), three marinas, two Yacht Clubs and, immediate access to the 'deep waters' of Massachusetts Bay and the Atlantic. One other attribute, which is also not uncommon, is a never ending (and large) supply of young, would-be, mariners seeking information and guidance in matters pertaining to the sea.

It should be pointed out that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as have many other jurisdictions, imposes regulations regarding the operation of power driven vessels. In order to operate a power driven vessel without on-board adult supervision, a state issued "Boating Safety Certificate" is required of minors between the ages of 12 and 16. In order to obtain such a Certificate an applicant must successfully complete an approved program, consisting of at least eight hours instruction and concluding with a proctored written examination. The USPS *Boat Smart* course is such a program.

Our squadron has been fortunate in developing a partner-like relationship with the Public School Department of the Town of Hingham. For many years we have had the gratuitous use of school facilities for Advanced Grade programs presented for USPS members, and our twice annual presentation of *The Squadron Boating Course*. We decided to capitalize upon that relationship and, over the summer months prior to the start of the 2000 school year, we worked closely with the Superintendent and other Administrators of the school department.

We presented the proposal that the school establish *Boat Smart* as a credit earning elective course, to be conducted during regular school hours for children attending the Middle School (ages 12 to 16). We proposed that the course be presented by our instructors, without charge. We did request a \$15 text book deposit requirement, to be refunded to each student at the completion of the course if texts were returned in useable condition. Our proposal was accepted and, our initial *Boat Smart* class enrolled 52 students in October, 2000.

The first course was presented in the school cafeteria in ten fifty minute sessions which, although 50 of our 52 enrolled students successfully completed the program, we found to be too protracted for their collective attention span. It further presented conflict with many of the students' other extra curricular activities (tennis, soccer, lacrosse, ice hockey, football, etc.).

We also found that a class of 52 youthful and exuberant students, and the 'non-classroom environment of the cafeteria, was not easily managed. Based on our initial experience, we now restrict the class size to not more than twenty-five students, hold class in a regular classroom, and restructured the course. The substance of the course is now presented in three two hour sessions, followed by a two hour review of all topics at the fourth meeting of the class, and a proctored examination at the fifth meeting. Rescheduled to be conducted on alternating Tuesdays and Thursdays, and commencing at the close of the regular school day, we now avoid much of the previous conflict with extra curricular activity scheduling and provide ample time for our students to complete the required reading and homework assignments..

Our classes are pre-enrolled. That is, a notice is sent to parents of Middle School students at the beginning of the school year, outlining the many extra curricular activities (including *Boat Smart*) in which the children may participate and the dates on which such activities commence. We furnish advance registration forms for our course to the school administration office and, a deadline of two weeks prior to the start of each class for 'sign-up' is established.

In order to present Bare Cove Squadron in its most desirable and professional light, each student's course material is pre-packaged and labeled with each student's name (we use a 2 gallon 'zip lock' freezer bag for this purpose). The "package" includes:

A course schedule and homework answer sheet;  
the USPS *Boat Smart Student Manual*;  
*The Massachusetts Boaters' Guide*;  
*Federal Requirements and Safety Tips for Recreational Boaters*; and,  
*U.S. Aids to Navigation System*

Unlike our adult programs, where examinations are typically corrected and scored upon their completion, parents of our students are advised by mail. Successful students are provided with a partially completed application for the state "Boating Safety Certificate", endorsed by an instructor, certifying the student's examination scores. The application must be completed by the parent or guardian and mailed to the Massachusetts Division of Recreational Vehicles.

It is the policy of the Middle School Administration to hold an "awards ceremony" at the conclusion of each school year, at which outstanding students are recognized for their accomplishments. In preparation for this annual event, the school is furnished a listing of the students who have successfully completed the *Boat Smart* program. At the "awards ceremony", representatives of the squadron present *Boat Smart Certificates of Completion* to each such student. Because of our school based activities, and the official recognition of our squadron by the school department, a substantial community awareness of USPS and its public service function has resulted.

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Because of the publicity we have received in the local press, we receive many inquiries from the school departments of adjoining towns concerning our program. However, Bare Cove Squadron does not possess either the human assets or financial resources necessary to expand our educational activities further. To the extent we are able, we do respond to requests to present the *Boat Smart* course at local Yacht Clubs, if such can be scheduled within our capacities. These courses, unlike those at the Hingham Middle School, are not presented 'free of charge' and the students retain all text materials.

The purpose of this communication is to acquaint you, and our national Educational Department, with the success we have enjoyed and the public relations capital which has resulted. Our methods, course structure, pre-packaging of materials, and overall professional appearance of all related to the courses, may be of assistance to the promotion of Boat Smart courses by other squadrons in areas of the country where boating is a prominent activity.

We believe that our approach might be useful as a 'model' to be adopted by other squadrons, as USPS strives to compete for recognition with USCGAUX, and other commercial enterprises which present boating safety and related educational programs. For your further information, I have enclosed specimens of that which we have developed. Should you, or any among your national staff, wish to discuss our approach, I would welcome the opportunity.

Very truly yours,



H. James Gorman, JN  
Educational Officer

HJG/wp  
Enclosures

CC: C. William Dawson, Commander