

Chapter 1

USPS HISTORY

Seldom does the complete story of an organization's founding survive the passage of time. We grope for much of the information and the gaps which remain in the minutes, manuals and magazines have to be filled with assumptions and memories of early associates. But this much is certain, in the list of founding fathers the name of Roger Upton of Boston and Marblehead, Massachusetts, stands pre-eminent. It was the projection of his thoughts, spirit and a reflection of his enthusiasm that would reach beyond the limits of any dream, a national organization to be known as United States Power Squadrons. But to begin, we must go back in time to the world of boating at the turn of the century.

Recreational boating in the early 1900s was largely confined to sailing craft and a sparse number of larger steam yachts generally manned by professional crews. Commercial ships of the day were all steam-driven, steam propulsion becoming king by the close of the twentieth century. Sailing schooners were fast becoming relics of a bygone era while internal combustion engine, gasoline-driven, crafts were coming into their own but with little enthusiasm on the part of out-and-out sailors. Yacht clubs taught and promoted the spirit of sailing, and as motor driven yachts joined their fleets there were few activities for them. Yachting was still for the sailors, and the new breed of powerboat men found scant fun on club cruises and almost none in racing.

Laws of the United States governing navigation applied only to steam vessels. Governed by a board of steamboat inspectors, crusty, old, sea-going men, these inspectors had little use whatsoever for the small internal combustion engine yachts. It was their fervent hope to gain control over these boats by placing them under the very same rules which governed ocean liners and other steam-powered vessels. Through education, the founders set out to protect power yachts from these steamboat inspectors and to forever remove the stigma of ignorance and foolhardiness which they

and professional sea captains and seamen had bestowed on their owners.

How long the idea for a club-within-a-club to embrace a select group of "gasoliners" who would develop such forms of cruising and racing as the new types of yachts would allow, we will never know, but in the summer of 1911 Upton spread his thoughts before a small group of colleagues. With acceptance of his ideas, Upton was elected rear commodore of the Boston Yacht Club in 1912 and was placed in charge of the unofficial power boat division of the fleet. A self-taught navigator and stickler for doing things right, he soon kept the division's 36 members busy with studies, cruises, races and drills modeled after U.S. Naval maneuvers. To quote from one of his articles, "*To my mind the organization can be of use to yachtsmen for three major reasons: **first**, improvement in navigating ability of power-boat owners; **second**, promotion of acquaintance and social intercourse by the power-boat owners; **third**, the fitting of power-boat owners to be of possible use to the Navy in time of war so that they might be received as volunteers should they so desire.*"

The social side of the organization included monthly dinners at which ship and tow captains, marine inspectors and other prominent persons were guest speakers. From these activities grew confidence in and a change of attitude toward the new breed of yachtsmen. Their quest for recognition was unintentionally improved during the summer of 1912 when 20 vessels from the Boston Yacht Club power boat division were invited to accompany the sailing yachts on their annual cruise to Portland, Maine. The power boats cruised in squadron formation with an elaborate system of maneuvers executed by means of flag signals. During the cruise a screeching nor'wester blew, and many of the sailing yachts were dismasted or otherwise disabled. It was then that the worth of the power yachts was quickly established as they sped under Upton's command to the rescue by towing all disabled craft safely to port. No losses were

reported. To quote the September 1912 issue of *Motor Boating Magazine*, which dramatized the rescue with a six-page photo story, “*The fellows of the Powerboat Division provided meritorious service and emerged from the ordeal crowned with glory.*”

It was 14 October 1912 that a letter from Rear Commodore Roger Upton, petitioning the Boston Yacht Club to officially establish the power boat division was read by the executive committee. As minutes of that meeting disclose, the executive committee granted Commodore Upton’s petition unanimously. It was at the annual meeting in January 1913 that the name was changed to “Power Squadron”, the name passed on to the organization, and the club within-a-club was officially recognized. Its officers and rules were printed in the 1913 Boston Yacht Club Yearbook. Officers were Roger Upton, commander; C. N. Burnell, lieutenant commander; and Nathaniel L. Stebbins, a noted Boston marine photographer, secretary.

A distinguishing power squadron pennant was designed to be flown above the yacht club. It featured a red field with centered white star at the hoist; the center third was white and the outer end, blue. Only when a prospective member was able to pass what now seems to have been a fairly difficult examination in advanced piloting subjects was he authorized to fly the streamer.

So ends the birth of the idea and its development into an active movement, but actually, this is only the beginning.

Sometime in January of 1914, the Power Squadron of the Boston Yacht Club called a conference of many yacht clubs throughout the country to determine if the “power squadron” idea could be developed among them and a national body was formed; those already active had come to realize that the movement was destined to grow beyond its present limits. Only some clubs along the Atlantic Seaboard attended, as could naturally be expected, but among them the officials of existing squadrons found a surprisingly great enthusiasm. Who attended and what was discussed, or where the meeting was held is not known as no minutes exist. But, it evidently showed plainly enough that it was

ready for nation-wide action. Accordingly, a second conference was called where final work was accomplished.

How quietly great movements start, destined in time to reach beyond the limits of one’s dreams. How quietly, like the first slow stirring of a ship upon the ways, this gleaming new hull slid down to her launching is shown in the simple, one-page recording of the birth certificate.

At the second conference to consider the question of formation of power squadrons, held at the New York Yacht Club on 2 February 1914, at eight o’clock in the evening, the following vote was passed and signed by the delegates whose names are set against their respective clubs or associations.

“That we, the undersigned, duly authorized delegates of the club or association set against our respective names do hereby associate such clubs or associations together as a national organization to be known as *United States Power Squadrons*, and we bind our clubs to abide by the rules and regulations adopted by said United States Power Squadrons.

- Yachtsmen’s Club of Philadelphia; C.L. Lagen, Commodore
- Power Boat Squadron of New Haven, Conn.; J.N. Champion, Commodore
- Larchmont Yacht Club; Francis M. Wilson
- Atlantic Yacht Club; Theodore D. Wells
- Corinthian Yacht Club of Philadelphia; C. Longstreth
- Rhode Island Yacht Club; William St. Streeter, Commodore
- New York Motor Boat Club; C.F. Chapman
- Hudson River Power Squadron; Franklin P. Pratt
- Lynn Yacht Club; A.D. Grover
- Knickerbocker Yacht Club; William E. Spencer
- Harlem Yacht Club; R.S. Haydock
- Portland Yacht Club; Holman F. Day, Rear Commodore
- Savin Hill Yacht Club; Charles A. J. Smith
- Kennebec Yacht Club; Charles E. Hyde
- Hudson River Yacht Racing Association; Worthington Scott

- Sachem's Head Yacht Club; W.C. Stringer
- Baltimore Yacht Club; Dwight F. Mallory
- Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club; Elliot Tuckerman
- Indian Harbor Yacht Club; Frank Bowne Jones
- Boston Yacht Club Power Squadron; William A. Hopkins

The signatures of Messrs. Longstreth, Stringer, Tuckerman and Jones are affixed subject to ratification of their respective clubs.”

And that is all. Yet it contains what the national body prescribes we shall forever know: the names of the founding fathers.

At this same meeting, the organization was made complete by the election of officers and members of the Governing Board included:

- Henry A. Morse,
- Captain DeWitt Coffman, USN (Boston Navy Yard);
- Charles Longstreth,
- Frank S. Cornwell,
- Francis M. Wilson
- and members of the bridge.

Captain Coffman, USN, later Vice Admiral, served on the Governing Board for many years as the representative of the Navy Department. The Honorable A.J. Tyrer, Deputy Commissioner of Navigation of the Department of Commerce, was also an active member of the early Governing Boards. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, then assistant secretary of the Navy, had been so impressed with the activities of the Power Squadrons that he sent his aide, Captain William F. Fullam, to attend the meeting, and as was reported in the press, Captain Fullam praised the organization in the highest terms possible.

April 1914 proved eventful. Roger Upton was granted a patent for the present USPS flag which eventually would replace the distinguishing pennant flown by power squadron members. At a meeting held at the Harvard Club of Boston, bylaws were approved by the Governing Board. The Atlantic Seaboard was divided into six districts for purposes of instruction, and boards of instruction and examination were appointed to

administer over them. From the very beginning, the accent has been upon education although it differed in the early days from the present system. Then, in addition to knowing the rules of the road, the compass, buoys, and chart bearings, a member was required to attend at least three squadron drills yearly to hold his membership certificate. When the member attended twelve, he became a privileged member and thereafter need only appear at one drill each year. Not more than six drills counted in any one year toward the member's qualification.

In March 1915 the present USPS flag was adopted. General Orders No 11, issued by Flag Lieutenant Stebbins from Boston on 18 May 1915 is of interest as it authorized the flying of USPS flag with or without USPS pennant, which up to this time had been the distinguishing flag of the squadrons. During World War I the Governing Board ordered that a pennant of somewhat different design from that of the original flown by squadron boats and the American flag be flown at the taffrail or gaff. Similarly, during World War II, Old Glory was flown in her proper place and USPS flag at the starboard spreader.

As the squadrons grew, both in number and size, the educational program developed to keep pace. There was a continuous revision and enlargement by the adoption of many suggestions from members, and the constant labor of committees on which the most highly skilled yachtsmen served with enthusiasm.

By 1916 there were 500 members, and many of these were clamoring for abolition of the on-water-drill requirements. However, it was not until some years later that a general uprising against them caused decided official action and they were reduced to a subordinate position as a second qualification to a new *Junior Navigator* course. Shortly thereafter, through lack of interest, they were abolished, and further courses of study replaced them. In 1917 a navigator course was introduced. This was the course to end all instruction, comprising a detailed review of all courses the candidate had ever been taught from his entrance examination to the JN course. It also included a practical demonstration of boat handling.

As World War I threatened to engage our nation, all Americans became very active in the preparedness movement. The United States declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917, and with the coming of hostilities, Charles F. Chapman sent a letter to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, volunteering the entire USPS instructional program for the training of men for naval coastal defense. Secretary Roosevelt accepted the proposal with gratitude. In New York City, four free nautical schools were established. Based on records, total enrollment exceeded three thousand students. Similar schools were organized by local squadrons in Boston, Detroit, Newburg, New Haven and Washington, D.C. Over five thousand men who attended these classes entered the armed services, and based in significant part on the quality of their USPS training, many were appointed officers. Squadron members themselves enlisted in the navy and many, because of their outstanding nautical education and background, soon earned commissions. A number of members were appointed by the Secretary of Commerce as "Navigation Inspectors" with duties on the water similar to those performed by the Coast Guard Auxiliary during World War II. These men were paid a dollar a year for their services.

Little effort was made to recruit new members in USPS during this period, and with many of the officers of the local squadrons in service, interest in USPS began to wane. With the coming of peace and the release from the navy, many of the members desired a rest from anything pertaining to the sea, so without this leadership, local squadron activities all but ceased. In addition, one of the principal objects of the squadrons had been, up to this time, to be of service to our navy in time of emergency. The emergency had now passed, and most members had all they wanted of small boat maneuvers based on anything connected with the navy. Conditions were not unlike those in most yachting organizations at that time. Interest was at a low ebb, and many yacht clubs and similar organizations went out of business. On 26 January 1918, Chief Commander Coe wrote the following in his annual report. "The demands of war have affected all social, fraternal and economic life, and our organization has not escaped the problems and handicaps which have arisen from this abnormal

condition."

At the fall meeting of the Governing Board in 1919, Chief Commander H.M. Williams reported that local squadron secretaries did not answer his letters; no dues could be collected; there was no money in USPS treasury; USPS debt was \$450.00; and he recommended that the members of the Governing Board chip in and pay the debt and that USPS disband. Chief Commander Williams was not a defeatist, but he viewed the existing situation from a realistic standpoint, and his recommendation might well have been made to bring the matter sharply to attention with a view to obtaining immediate and definite action.

Vice Commander A.B. Bennett expressed the opinion that such action would be a mistake and that he was sure if certain changes were adopted, the squadrons could be revived. The changes he suggested were:

- 1) To change the certificate holder from being only a member of a local squadron, reached only through his local squadron secretary, to first being a member of United States Power Squadrons, thus making him answerable to USPS and secondly, a member of the local squadron;
- 2) To eliminate all boat drills and maneuvers. The war was over, and men were through with such activities;
- 3) To eliminate the restriction of membership to members of yacht clubs and admit any worthy man who passed the examination.

Inasmuch as the oldest institutions of man in the world were institutions of learning, USPS should stress education and nothing else.

Vice Commander Bennett suggested that the constitution be rewritten to include the above changes and submitted for adoption at the annual meeting, 28 February 1920. The Governing Board authorized Vice Commander Bennett to rewrite the constitution. At the annual meeting in 1920, Vice Commander Bennett was elected chief commander, and Rear Commander Harry Jackson was elected vice commander. James T. Bresnahan of the Potomac Squadron was elected secretary. The new constitution was adopted. There was no list of members, but the mailing list of *The Ensign* con-

tained a thousand names. Chief Commander Bennett and Secretary Bresnahan then drafted a letter to each on the mailing list, informing them of the changes in the constitution, also that all unpaid dues had been waived and asking each one to sign on and pay one dollar dues for 1920. One hundred forty two plus nineteen reinstatements signed on, a few from each of the former squadrons. These men were appointed as local boards of examiners and were urged to start classes of instruction to prepare men for the spring entrance examination. Much of this was done by letter, but the chief commander visited many groups and helped them to make a new start. It was a difficult task but one which ended in success for Chief Commander Bennett, the only chief commander to serve more than two years. At the close of his fourth year, there were over four hundred members, over four hundred dollars in the treasury and no debt.

New certificates were issued in 1920. The chief commander printed the names of the members on the certificates in old English, and this may also explain why certificate number 1 was issued to Charles F. Chapman whose membership date was among the earliest.

This was the organization which C/C Harry Jackson inherited in January 1924, and it received his enthusiastic and wholehearted care that meant so much in those early days. If credit for perpetuating USPS should go to any two men, it should go to this Bennett-Jackson team.

USPS grew slowly during these formative years, and by April 1931 the organization reported a total membership of only 840 in 12 squadrons. If the quantity of members was disappointing in the early thirties, the quality of instruction taught by members was not. With the introduction of *Advanced Piloting* in 1932, the advanced grades program was established. By November of that year, USPS had 1431 members in 13 squadrons.

In October 1933, the Committee on Rules presented a plan for changing the bylaws into a constitution and writing a new set of bylaws containing details for the operation of a squadron. These were approved the following year by the membership.

The future looked brighter than ever.

The Governing Board, on 13 December 1938, approved the establishment of seven divisions consisting of thirty-three squadrons and the appointment of a rear commander to administer each division. Later, the division designation was changed to "district". USPS had 4406 members by the end of 1938.

On 14 January 1939, the organization celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Twenty-one squadrons were represented at a dinner-dance at New York's Hotel Astor, one of the largest and most successful affairs ever held by USPS. In honor of the occasion, President Roosevelt sent a letter of congratulations, praising the civic service. Later that year, the president accepted honorary membership in USPS bestowed upon him by vote of the Governing Board.

If 1939 was a milestone in history, it was also a year of tragedy. Once again, the world erupted into war. Less than 24 hours after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, on 8 December 1941, Vice Commander William Sayers sent a telegram to President Roosevelt and to the Secretary of the Navy offering USPS support for America's war effort. For the second time in 24 years, President Roosevelt accepted this support with appreciation.

During World War II, over 3000 USPS members entered the armed forces, including C/C William Anderson, who was sworn in as a lieutenant commander, U.S. Navy Reserve. In February 1941 the National War Course Committee was formed which set standards in the instruction of navigation and related subjects. Also in 1941 the Special Courses Committee was formed which developed curricula in first aid, signaling, motor mechanics, air navigation, meteorology and seamanship. Classes boomed with instruction for service personnel, civilians and members, all eager to qualify for advanced ratings. Thousands of members served with the Red Cross, merchant marine and other war-related services, all contributing significant assistance to the nation. With the encouragement of USPS, more than twenty-five squadrons actively assisted the Coast Guard Auxiliary during this period. Friendly cooperation between the two

organizations has been traditional ever since.

USPS grew during World War II, and by 1945 it had become apparent that a paid staff and office space were needed for the national secretary to meet increased responsibilities. A resolution was adopted authorizing Secretary Charles Leach to employ such clerical help as necessary. A three-room ground floor apartment in Englewood, New Jersey, was rented for the storage of USPS supplies and records. Shortly thereafter, an office manager was hired for USPS, and with a staff of three, the clerical and storage needs of growing membership and educational programs were being served adequately.

Seamanship had been added as a special course in 1942. Other special courses followed in first aid, signaling, motor mechanics and weather in 1945. Instruction techniques was also launched in this period.

Due to the rapid growth from 1935 to 1945 it became apparent that administrative changes were needed. In 1945 the planning committee was formed under the direction of P/C/C Frederic W. Keator, N. The initial project was the development of a district organization; until then the "rear commander in charge of district" served without any staff. A model district bylaws was prepared and adopted by District 1 to which Keator and several other planning committee members belonged. At the 14 April 1947 meeting these were approved by the Governing Board, on recommendation of the Committee on Rules. USPS more than doubled its size during the forties, and as the organization entered the fifties, the demands placed upon headquarters became even greater.

The bylaws provided for the election of the district officers by the delegates to the district conference, rather than the Governing Board. The officers included the district commander (reserving the rank of rear commander for the national organization), staff captains (forerunners of the executive and administrative officers), the secretary and treasurer (serving without rank) and appointed officers as required. The district council, composed of the district bridge and commanders of the squadrons of the district, met more frequently than the two con-

ferences annually. The result was increased interest in district affairs, improved interchange of ideas between squadrons and improved performance of the district commander.

While the pilot district operation was being tested, the planning committee developed a plan for the national operation to provide for the executive, administrative and educational departments, as well as the secretary and treasurer, each headed by a vice commander and assisted by rear commanders as required. There was also the need for a legal officer, financial officer and assistant secretary.

Contrary to the original concept, the squadron commanders had become a minority of the Governing Board outnumbered by 20% by members-at-large (one for each 100 members). This ratio was reduced to one for every 300 members (600 currently) and not to exceed the number of rear commanders.

The first elected district commanders were approved for sixteen districts and for unattached squadrons and personnel. The headquarters staff, which had increased to six, moved into a combination office and warehouse in the same community. Within five years these facilities proved inadequate so in 1958, USPS moved into even larger quarters in Englewood. The organization grew significantly during the fifties. In May 1959, the national secretary reported 45,000 members in 268 squadrons.

In 1960 the seed of the cooperative charting program was sown when the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey initiated a program to provide a series of specially designed charts for recreational boaters. In its first year the program produced fewer than 300 reports, but during the year ending 30 September 1992 nearly 60,000 revision data reports were filed representing more than \$15 million in supporting services and taxpayer savings.

Recreational boating was booming as USPS entered the sixties. A sail course was added in 1953, a marine electronics course was published in 1961, and by 1966, when Commander Chapman was awarded his fiftieth merit mark, the organization had recorded a membership of over 60,000

members in 348 squadrons.

In April 1973, on the sixtieth anniversary of USPS, Boston Yacht Club was presented a plaque to commemorate the origin of USPS in 1913. Also during that same year, in October, a plaque was presented to the New York Yacht Club as a reminder of the place where the original charter of USPS had been formalized in 1914.

By 1974, the sixtieth anniversary, USPS had succeeded beyond the founder's fondest dreams. Membership exceeded 70,000 in 425 squadrons. A new headquarters building had been constructed in Montvale, New Jersey. However, owing to public complications, in September 1975, USPS Governing Board voted to move its base to Raleigh, North Carolina. The relocation was completed, and operations were well underway when, in 1978, construction was begun on a modern office and warehouse. The new Raleigh headquarters was occupied by the end of the year. An additional two-story wing was added during 1990-91 to include a memorial library and up-to-date computerized procedures which would enable the staff to handle extensive printing requirements, control educational inventory and respond to virtually every kind of membership request.

Because of litigation in New York and New Jersey in the latter half of the seventies and early eighties over the issue of private status versus public accommodation, coupled with a sagging national economy registering high rates of inflation and unemployment, membership fell to the low 50,000s in 454 squadrons and 33 districts. Governing Board action at the September 1981 and the September 1982 meetings recognized two important and significant aspects of USPS participation. In 1981, members whose long service had earned them 50 merit marks were granted the status of Governing Board member emeritus and with it, lifetime voting privileges. In 1982, changes in the constitution and bylaws eliminated the male-only membership rule and permitted women to become active members. Although many women had long held a "woman's certificate," which entitled them to enroll in all USPS courses, it was apparent that boating had become a family-oriented endeavor, and the bylaw change also made family member-

ship available. The first female active and family members were accepted in November 1982. A reduced dues structure was established to accommodate the change, and it was further established that only one copy of the national publication, *The Ensign*, would be mailed to an address shared by an active and one or more family members. Concerning the publication, the editorial and publications activities were transferred in December 1982 from San Mateo, California, to USPS headquarters in Raleigh.

The educational department, constantly seeking improved course materials and better participation by members, introduced a new piloting course and added a new addition to the list of elective courses, cruise planning. A varied curriculum of supplemental courses were also made available including a skipper saver program which can be presented by a USPS member to any interested group. To assist boating enthusiasts who prefer TV instruction to classroom attendance, and for anyone else who desires a modern approach to the subject, USPS and the William Morrow Company produced USPS boating course on video. A further indication of the latest techniques to improve membership knowledge is the Operations Training Program, and its offshoot, Leadership Development. When today's better-informed members are out to insure their boats, USPS now boasts its own marine insurance program with both low rates and sound coverage.

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of USPS, five large USPS ensigns traversed all of the United States and Canada, visiting every squadron and many units of CPS. Two special ensigns logged 1,000,600,000 miles in their journey over all seven seas on board the NASA shuttle, Atlantis, between 4 and 8 May 1989. Still another went to Moscow and a replica of the ceremonial ensign flew at the Greenwich meridian. Eventually, all ceremonial ensigns converged at the Governing Board meeting in Richmond, Virginia, on 16 September of that year. Part of the celebration included a visit by Chief Commander William D. Selden, IV, SN, to the White House where he looked on as President George Bush signed a proclamation honoring USPS.

USPS entered the 1990s inspired by the enthusiasm generated from the anniversary year celebrations. USPS began using a shorter, six session boating course. A video boating course was completed to be used in teaching the course. A new "Life Saving Award" was developed recognizing members who saved the lives of others. Dues were reduced for "additional active members" in the same household. USPS helped the United States Coast Guard celebrate its two hundredth year anniversary in "Coast Guard City, USA", Grand Haven, Michigan, and extended cooperation with the USCG Auxiliary reaching an agreement whereby each organization would accept the other's basic boating course as the requisite for membership.

There were other significant commitments and changes as well, but none more meritorious or which displayed the unity of the organization's personnel toward much needed additional space than "The Headquarter's Building Fund" campaign. Membership voluntarily purchased deeded square inches of North Carolina real estate, purchased bricks for a special wall, bought silver or gold anchors, and even raffle tickets for talking toy parrots contributing more than \$450,000.00, more than enough to pay for the expansion, without any cost to USPS treasury.

In 1992 USPS had the honor of leading the parade of boats into the Miami, Florida, harbor as replicas of the three Columbus caravels made this their first of 21-ports-of-call as part of the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. More than 230 sailing vessels from around the world celebrated by gathering together 5-14 June in the harbor of Old San Juan. The armada enjoyed the gracious hospitality of the Puerto Rican squadrons before making its way toward New York Harbor for the Fourth of July Tall ships Festival where USPS had an important part.

USPS offered broadened coverage in a new On-the-Water Insurance Policy which will have a long term impact in attracting students and member retention. The administration then approved a unique youth program partnership with USCG Auxiliary in a cooperative effort to prepare and teach the same youth course, namely *Boating*

Safety, to any age group with the target audience, ages 10 - 16. A new no-fee affinity credit card was offered, and more significantly, USPS Constitution was repealed and new USPS Bylaws were approved, combining the constitution and bylaws. USPS adopted a new *USPS Pledge*.

Of major significance during 1995, the Caribbean squadrons became District 33, and in October 1995, headquarters listed 59,746 active members of whom 16,060 were women, about 27% of the membership. For fifteen years women had been eligible for membership in USPS, and their numbers have grown steadily. Women continue to make impressive strides in both educational and administrative areas.

In 1997 USPS adopted the slogan T.E.A.M., "Together Everybody Accomplishes More," which challenged the membership to greater heights. Policy changes now permitted boating courses to be conducted in squadron-owned or leased facilities. Significant bylaw and policy changes were also made to move USPS from a strictly "invitation" type of membership procedure to one that allows membership by "application" with a means to determine membership interest while retaining selectivity. A new marketing committee was established to redefine USPS as the premier educational boating organization world-wide. To help solve one identity problem, USPS Bylaws were changed to allow squadrons the option of adding "Sail and" to the squadron name.

USPS celebrated its 85th anniversary with enthusiasm. There was the Voyage of the Ensign II, beginning in San Juan, Puerto Rico, at the 1999 Spring Governing Board meeting and concluding in Orlando, Florida, at the 2000 Annual Meeting. Five commemorative USPS ensigns, with a send-off by colorful fireworks, traveled thousands of miles from squadron to squadron to be welcomed home with music and a never-to-be-forgotten laser demonstration of lights. There had been dinners, boat parades and rendezvous all across the nation. These ensigns are now on display at USPS headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina.

USPS commissioned an historic USPS painting with a limited edition of 2000 signed and

numbered prints depicting a 1915 scene in Marblehead Harbor. The renowned marine artist Donald Demers presented the painting to USPS at the anniversary party held at the Boston Yacht Club where USPS history began so many years ago.

A new ensign was also designed, not only to celebrate the 85th anniversary of USPS but also to recognize the arrival of the new millennium 2000.

With the advent of a new millennium, we achieved some significant milestones, set new goals and reorganized to meet the needs of existing members and attract new ones. To meet the needs of our membership there have been many changes and updates to bring USPS into the electronic age. One example is DB2000, a computer program designed to give an accessible up to date database for squadrons, districts and national to use in maintaining records, submitting forms and providing contact information. Over the years DB2000 has been updated to allow electronic merit mark and historian report submission, education department updates, officer slate submission on OD 1 and 2. This action saves storage, postage and eliminates paper waste for national. USPS now also has web access at the national, district and squadron levels for most of our members.

To reduce expenses and be friendly to our environment, USPS now offers many newsletters and *The Ensign* on-line as well. Also, to streamline operations, USPS reduced the number of national meetings from three to two per year. As well, the national auditing committee was eliminated as it was determined that the independent auditor must duplicate most if not all of the committee efforts. We are looking at other ways to modify operating expenses.

The USPS bylaws have been amended and rewritten over the years to incorporate a Board of Directors to conduct business for USPS. The

model bylaws for squadrons and districts have also been made available on-line to speed up the process of changing/updating existing bylaws. Structural changes and consolidation of committees with overlapping or obsolete missions have been implemented to make USPS more efficient, allowing USPS to meet the needs of members. Two new committees have been added: the Marketing Committee to help in our endeavors to attract new members and to get USPS in front of the public, and the Environmental Committee to educate membership and publicize efforts both internally externally.

The Education Department has also gone through some major changes and revisions over the years in an effort to bring members the most current and accurate information in the available courses for members. New for USPS are USPS University and seminars we can deliver to the general public. An on-line offering called America's Boating Course is also available for potential members to take. The Education Department is working on many other updates and offerings for the membership as well. The Executive Department also stepped forward bringing a new offering: Vessel Safety Checks; this was originally established in a working partnership with the Coast Guard Auxiliary. USPS has many working partnerships and memorandums of understanding with the boating industry, the Coast Guard, NASBLA and other organizations.

In 2004 USPS celebrated its ninetieth anniversary and in 2014 will celebrate 100 years. In 2008 we welcomed our first women life members.

USPS has entered the new millennium, is becoming readily accessible to the public and our membership and is looking to the future. As with all civic organizations we have experienced challenges and made changes to meet those challenges headon. Members are the backbone of the organization and our future.

