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Singing River Sail and Power Squadron



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District Fifteen

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The Commander's Corner

Cdr. Gerry Sorrell, P

Ahoy shipmates, it's January 1913

and our organization was born in Boston at the Boston Yacht Club. Our forefathers were brave knowledgeable seamen with a force to be reckoned with to depart their expertise on the seafaring community. They put together an organization that has prospered until today and has given our communities dedicated service. Our organization during time of war provided seamanship training to service men for the defense of our country. Yes we were active for our country when she needed us and we were there when storms threatened the lives of our seamen. We were born out of a yacht club community and our organization grew in membership from the yacht clubs across America and our burgees flew above the yacht club burgee at the yacht clubs across America. I have noticed we have some beautiful yacht clubs within our local community. The clubs and marinas have been rebuilt after Katrina and the marinas are filling up again. The marinas are modernized and offer first class services. We may be able to repeat history and grow from within the yacht clubs again as we did in our infancy. How many yacht clubs are within our Squadron area? Who leads these yacht clubs and do they know we were born out of their organizations? Is there still a partnering for us to pursue? In addition, to the forgoing, our organization worked closely, during the second world war, with the Coast Guard Auxiliary. This was a teaming effort that pushed our organizations into the forefront of safe boating for the local communities. In conclusion, our organization and local waterfront is coming back to its pre-Katrina vitality. As part of that revitalization, we are going to focus part of our prospective training agenda this year towards our local yacht clubs. Our local yacht clubs sustained significant damage from Katrina and are in the process of reopening new facilities in some case and others mounting new membership drives. The key is to see if there is an interest for us to provide training at their facilities and renew old friendships after Katrina.

MUSINGS AFTER ANAHEIM

D/Lt/C John B. Wilkes, AP

Having just returned from the Governing Board Meeting in Anaheim, I thought it might be appropriate to share some of my thoughts with the membership about the present state of the organization. I would have to say that I think the present National leadership is on the best track available to them, and I was in full agreement with almost everything I heard from them at this meeting. The paranoia over declining membership has dissipated, and there is a general willingness to let squadrons determine their own destiny. This makes a world of sense to me because all squadrons are not created equal. Some are more social oriented and some are more education oriented, and of course, there are probably as many opinions on fixative strategies as there are squadrons. As a practical matter, the only real required participation insisted upon at the National level is that which is needed to maintain and not jeopardize our tax exempt status. Our core purpose of promoting boating safety is what allows us this cherished status. This is also the impetus behind the requirement to teach at least one boating course per year, because up until recently, an entry level boating course is all that we offered to the public.

There are many issues and differences between squadrons and locales regarding the public boating courses. Many of our squadrons are faced with a great deal of competition from other agencies, and then again, many are not so heavily burdened. I refuse to worry about this. If the State government or the Coast Guard, etc. want to promulgate cheaper, shorter boating classes, fine. We now have the ability to offer all our advanced classes as well as those great new seminars to the general public. In my view, this is a fantastic marketing opportunity which has a much greater potential of producing quality new members than the boating courses ever had. In today's atmosphere, direct recruiting attempts to get people to join an organization are just not successful. They push people away and

(Continued on page 2)

D/15 2009 SPRING CONFERENCE

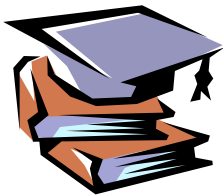
D/15 Conference Chair, P/C Dot Warner

In less than two months Singing River Sail & Power Squadron will host D/15 Spring Conference.

This will be an important conference. SRSPS's own John Wilkes will be installed as District Commander. Every member of SRSPS is urged to attend the conference and support John. The conference site will be the LaFont Inn in Pascagoula and convenient for everyone. This will be a good time to renew acquaintances with members of other squadrons in D/15. The National Chief's Rep to attend the spring conference will be R/C William Nief, SN from Tarpon Springs, FL.

The conference will kick off with a "Golf Scramble" on Friday morning, for anyone interested in playing golf. The golfers will return to the LaFont Inn in time to freshen up for a good ole Mexican hospitality starting at five o'clock. The hospitality is a casual and a fun time evening. Saturday, the conference will commence at approximately 9 o'clock with lunch at 12 o'clock.

After lunch those that are interested will travel to Keesler Field for a visit with the Hurricane Hunters. You will be able to see first hand the Hurricane Hunter's airplane and talk with the crew about their missions. There will be a reception hosted by the incoming commander Saturday evening followed by dinner and Change of Watch. The purpose of the Change of Watch is to dismiss the current bridge and swear in the new Commander and Bridge members. Be sure to mark your calendar for April 24 - 26, 2009.



From the Education Officer

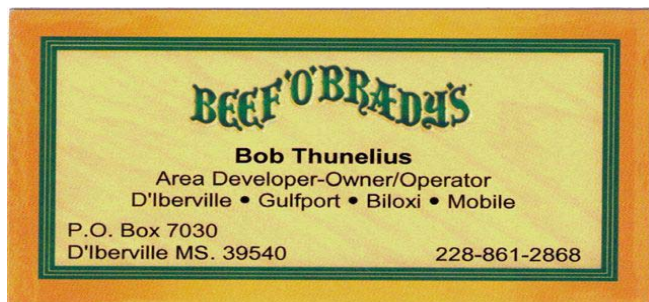
P/S/C Stan Warner, N

Breaking news! At the February

membership meeting, a lively discussion ensued about approaching the Biloxi and or Ocean

Springs Yacht Clubs about the feasibility of holding our Spring Public Boating course at one of their beautiful new facilities. Some of our members are also members of those yacht clubs and they have volunteered to discuss this possibility with their Commodores. The interaction between these boating clubs and our members may provide an excellent opportunity for increasing or own membership.

Our current plans are to hold the Spring Boating Course in May after the Spring Conference (which we host in April) will be over and out of the way. This will be the only Public Boating Course we will host this year. However, if enough members express a desire for any of the advanced or elective courses, we will arrange for these. This is in keeping with the Squadron's adopted policy of providing more fraternal events this year such as rendezvous, CoOp charting and vessel safety checks for our mem-



(Continued from page 1) Musings after Anaheim

demean the value of membership to present members. Advertising our courses is a different matter. They are straightforward with no mystery into what a prospective member might be getting himself involved. Once a newcomer has experienced our instructors and proctors in the classroom, discussions regarding what we do and how we members love to do it, will naturally follow, and folks will cultivate a desire to join on their own - sort of..... One of the main problems with declining membership is the resulting falling revenues and the havoc it plays with budgets. The National Bridge is working hard to make cuts to keep up with the shortfall. Offering all our courses and seminars to the public will be a very good and welcome source of revenue. The idea would be to charge the public a higher price than a member, which in itself will be an effective incentive to join. Each squadron can set its own prices as long as they cover the costs of materials. We have the ability to offer these courses in local yacht clubs, community colleges, universities. Often they will let us use a top notch classroom and will advertize our course to their members or students for us. One of the reasons we have not taught more advanced classes to our members is because it is often difficult to muster enough students to justify the instructors efforts. Adding students from the public sector should increase the frequency of our courses and thus, the upward education of our members.

Another experience that curtails the initiation of an advanced course is the specter of *sign ups* who turn up to be *no shows* causing squadrons to have to eat the cost of their materials. If I have my way, this is a problem the District is well able to take off the squadrons' shoulders by acting as a clearing house. The District will buy all unused materials and the squadron will check the District's inventories before ordering. If a squadron has ten

(Continued on page 3)

From the Co-op Charting Chair

Lt. Chuck Kraeger, AP

Those of us that seek excitement will find it on May 16th. There is a trip to Sand Island being planned so we can do some charting. This will be unusual in that Sand Island is not identified on any chart! Since I am not from the coast I emailed John Wilkes with the question "Does Sand Island go by another name?" His response was that he always knew it to be Sand Island off the Western tip of Petit Bois Island. Sure enough with much magnification I found it right where he said it would be. However it is not named on the chart. On chart 11373 it is north and west of the western tip of Petit Bois Island. It is on the western side of the ship channel. If you look at the chart you will see all kinds of symbols used for navigation in the area. Our challenge is to find errors on the chart or confirm accuracy and develop enough detail to send corrections to NOAA. Any of the following implements you may have will be useful in the task at hand: GPS, camera, tape-measure, paper and pencil, sunscreen and liquids. This is a good chance to meet your fellow boaters in a less crowded environment. There will be more information before the event. Hope to see you there.

(Continued from page 2) Musings after Anaheim

people sign up and the District holds three sets of books, the squadron will get the three from District and order seven. If not all ten show up the leftovers will be sold back to the District.

There is another change that is now with us that will enhance our recruiting of good new long term members through the VSE program. Accomplishing a VSC has always been a great opportunity to talk one on one (or even two on one) to the kind of folks we really want in the organization – people who enjoy boating and who already know how. In the past, there have been numerous times that, after conducting a VSC, I had a boat captain with many years experience very interested in joining USPS but lost him when I had to tell him he had to take Public Boating Course before he could join. No more! Now they don't have to take the entry level course.

Another thought I had has to do with information technology. I think every squadron should have at least one computer guru and the position of Information Technology Officer should be prominently placed in the squadron wire diagram. If a squadron doesn't have such a person, recruiting precisely for this position might actually be attractive to younger computer geeks. I would think it would even be worth an ad in the "helped wanted" section of the local newspaper. His or her duties would be to conduct all the squadron business connected with

CRUISE PLANNING

Why cruise? Cruising requires an inquiring mind. Cruising requires a deep sense of curiosity. Cruising becomes a need for inquiring about what is present where you are, and a need for new goals and accomplishments. Cruising is a test of your personal capabilities and knowledge. Cruising is a fulfillment of personal dreams. Now you know some of the reasons people cruise, whether for short times or for extended distances and time.

Our good friend, Don, had a childhood dream of cruising from his first catboat. His Navy service past normal retirement age didn't satisfy that yearning. He selected his vessel with world-cruising in mind. He spent time to learn the vessel and its quirks. He explored it's characteristics in Mississippi and near-by waters. When he retired from his civilian occupation, he relocated the vessel to the Atlantic seaside to learn more of the nature of ocean travel in a small boat. Then he felt prepared to accomplish his lifelong dream-cruising around the world,

We were fortunate enough to be invited to join the first portion of his travels. We joined him in Fort Lauderdale to head out to 35N, 65W and turn south for the Virgin Islands. That changed with a 3 day violent storm near the turning point that had us going back to Spanish Wells in the Bahamas, assisting another vessel that had been losing rigging and drinking water. After a required trip to Nassau to clear customs, we sailed east to Allen Cay, and then continued at a leisurely pace along the west side of the island train, visiting various cays down to Georgetown, where our available time was up.

Don continued cruising for the next twelve years, spending extended time exploring along the way and completing his life-long dream.

That adventure beyond coastal cruising is what hooked us, resulting in the purchase of *Vagabond Shoes* and beginning our own extended cruising.

More next month, but in the meantime.... Fair Winds & Following Seas,

Joe & Marilyn Harvey

DB2000 including Merit Mark inputs on behalf of the commander, manage the squadron web site, and at least assist the newsletter editor with publication of the squadron newsletter. It would be a piece of cake for most young computer savvy folks and a few old folks who haven't lost their patience to learn.

After a rewarding experience at Anaheim, I am very glad to say I am reinvigorated in my pride and love for our organization. It is still manned by tens of thousands of the best people in the world, and I still feel honored to be one of you.



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The Joke De Jour Corner



NATIVE AMERICAN HUMOR

It's late fall and the Indians on a remote reservation in South Dakota asked their new chief if the coming winter was going to be cold or mild. Since he was a chief in a modern society, he had never been taught the old secrets. When he looked at the sky, he couldn't tell what the winter was going to be like. Nevertheless, to be on the safe side, he told his tribe that the winter was indeed going to be cold and that the members of the village should collect firewood to be prepared. But, being a practical leader, after several days, he got an idea. He went to the phone booth, called the National Weather Service and asked, "Is the coming winter going to be cold?"

"It looks like this winter is going to be quite cold," the meteorologist at the weather service responded. So the chief went back to his people and told them to collect even more firewood in order to be prepared. A week later, he called the National Weather Service again. "Does it still look like it is going to be a very cold winter?"

"Yes," the man at National Weather Service again replied, "it's going to be a very cold winter."

The chief again went back to his people and ordered them to collect every scrap of firewood they could find. Two weeks later, the chief called the National Weather Service again. "Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to be very cold?" "Absolutely," the man replied. "It's looking more

and more like it is going to be one of the coldest winters we've ever seen."

"How can you be so sure?" the chief asked.

The weatherman replied, "The Indians are collecting firewood like crazy."

Always remember this whenever you get advice from a government official!

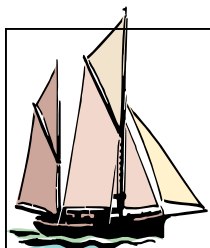
Indian Chief Two Eagles was asked by a white government official, "You have observed the white man for ninety years. You've seen his wars and his technological advances. You've seen his progress, and the damage he's done." The Chief nodded in agreement. The official continued, "Considering all these events, in your opinion, where did the white man go wrong?"

The Chief stared at the government official for over a minute and then calmly replied. "When white man find this land with Indians running it, there were no taxes, no debt, plenty buffalo, plenty beaver, clean water. Women did all the work. Medicine man free. Indian man spend all day hunting and fishing; all night having sex." Then the chief leaned back and smiled. "Only white man dumb enough to think he could improve system like that."

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OVER THE HORIZON

March 19 SRSPS Business Meeting, Gautier VFW
 March 21 District 15 Spring Council Meeting, Holiday Inn, Moss Point
 April 16 SRSPS Business Meeting, Gautier, VFW
 April 24-26 D15 Fall Conference, LaFont Inn, Pascagoula, MS