



of TARS & TERNS

Newsletter of the Northern Virginia Sail & Power Squadron

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May 2005

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ANOTHER SMASH HIT: D5 SPRING CONFERENCE

31 Mar – 03 Apr. NVSPS members were prominently featured in the awards and recognitions handed out this year at the annual District 5 (D5) spring meeting. Ben Fulton's life-saving efforts were highlighted by a special award from the USPS Chief Commander (see *oT&T* front page story for February 2005). This annual conclave is actually dedicated to educational matters, but it always manages to sneak in plenty of serious partying. The NVSPS is proud to claim its rightful place at the very forefront of the partying sail-and-power squadrons. Our squadron's theme this year was "weather preparedness, ready or not". Of course there were serious messages for the touring members of the other 38 squadrons in D5 (the largest of the USPS' 33 districts), but P/C John Shivik, A/P, was also able to saturate the crowds with his unique store of weather jokes. Thunderous approval met his two weathermen, each with a broken arm and leg, when they called in from a hospital about their four casts. And lightning struck again with a woman walking outside with an open purse while hoping for some change in the weather. Our crew



Ben Fulton

(photo by P/C Alan Hart AP)

handed out over 300 weather-prediction rocks (if the rock's white it's snowing, if it's wet it's raining, etc.) and 16-ounce bottles of water compliments of the hydrologic cycle. A functional anemometer was the highlight of our windfall display of weather instruments, emphasizing the udder disaster of a cow lifted into the air by a tornado's funnel. Or the Russian cold warrior named Rudolph who told his wife it looked like a storm was coming; when she asked how he could possibly know, he replied "because Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear." These hits just kept on coming, and we have it on good authority that next year will be even better.

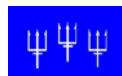


Happy D5 crowd



Cdr Keith B. Segerson, P

From the Commander



Thanks for our D5 conference success goes especially to Jean and P/C Dick Durgin, JN, and to Robie and P/C John Shivik, AP. This Spring Conference was exactly the kind of event that makes your NVSPS such an excellent source of education and networking opportunities while providing you with boatloads of fun in the process. If you missed this year's conference, you should be especially sure to plan for it next year. Believe me, you'll be glad you did.



The organizers

The next all-hands meetings will feature former NVSPS members and round-the-world cruisers John and Lynn Walker. They're exciting and informative speakers, so you certainly don't want to miss this. These monthly meetings are another excellent opportunity to network with other members and fellow boaters. If you haven't been taking advantage of them, you certainly should, be. We'll see you there next Wednesday?



SQUADRON CALENDAR

MAY 2005

- 11 All Hands' Meeting
at BoatUS headquarters
- 15 SUMMER CRUISE deposit **deadline**
send form and monies to: Joel Bailey
- 15 *oT&T* submissions due for June
send them to: psoballe@yahoo.com
- 21 Family Picnic
Fairfax Yacht Club
- 28-30 Memorial Day Cruise
Mears Yacht Haven, Oxford MD

JUNE 2005

- 1-5 USPS Spring Governing Board
Charlotte NC
- 8 All Hands' Meeting
at BoatUS headquarters
- 17-19 D5 Rendezvous
Southern Chesapeake
- 24-30 Summer Cruise
details in April oT&T
- 26 Navigation contest
Sassafras river

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EXEC'S MOMENT



Hopefully all of your boats are ready for the season. Speaking of getting ready . . . if you missed the April all-hands meeting, you missed a great speaker. Paul Fleury, a specialist in marine corrosion, gave a terrific talk on what causes it and how to prevent it.

The guest speakers alone make the monthly all-hands meetings worth attending, but there are other good reasons. For example, the monthly reports can give you valuable information. At April's meeting our Legislative Liaison, Lt Thomas Martin, AP, reported on his research about Virginia fuel tax refunds. As many of you know, you can file a form to get back \$0.17 per gallon (the VA road tax portion) for gasoline used in your boat on fuel bought in Virginia. At a previous meeting the question arose whether that gasoline had to be purchased at a marina, or could trailer boaters who fill up at gas stations also get the refund? Tom did the research and made the calls. He found out that YES, trailer boaters were eligible The gasoline does not have to be purchased from a marina. In all cases, whether at a marina or on land, there is a 5-gallon minimum to qualify. But save those receipts! And they must be legible, so if you pay at the pump and the receipt from the dispenser is not legible, you should go inside and get another.

There will be a Cooperative Charting training session in Norfolk April 29-30. If you can't attend but are interested in Co-op Charting or geodetic marker recovery field trips, please contact Ed Phillips : (703) 771-7096.

We were recognized for having performed the most Vessel Safety Checks (VSC) in the large squadron category ("large squadron" means over 200 active members) on 02Apr at the D5 Conference in Williamsburg. Congratulations to our VSC chair Elaine Colen and all of our Vessel Examiners. P/C Al Sheetz, AP, was our busiest examiner last year. And I understand that this year Al has already done over 30 . . . and he's just warming up!

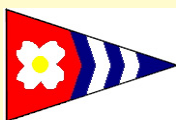
National Safe Boating Week is May 21-27. We'd like all of our Vessel Examiners to step up their activities that week if at all possible.

NVSPS spent a couple weekends in April doing VSCs along with the Coast Guard Auxiliary at the Prince William Marina. Many boats were examined, and a big thanks goes to all who participated. More VSC dates are coming up at places like Tim's Rivershore and at West Marine in Woodbridge for trailer boaters. But keep in mind that you can always do VSCs on your own. It doesn't have to be at a "VSC day". Near a boat-launch area could be a good choice. Small trailerable boats are more likely to have deadly accidents as compared to boats over 26 feet, and examiners are in a position to really help these folks with smaller boats.

If you'd like to be a Vessel Examiner, please contact Elaine Colen: elsc97@aol.com. Once you do you'll be e-mailed information about other upcoming VSC events. Many say that doing VSCs is their favorite squadron activity and it's a great way to become more active. You'll get to see all kinds of boats and have the satisfaction of knowing you helped out fellow boaters.

Have a safe boating season!

SHIP'S STORE



Need a new burgee, sport shirt or name tag?

Contact P/C Paula Bailey, AP
(703) 444-5169





Lt/C G. Jay Nelson, AP

EDUCATION

The quality of education offered by USPS is exceptional and unequalled anywhere for the cost. We've long recognized that our education program is the key element in building membership. Unfortunately we can't expose our educational program to the general public aside from our basic boating courses. Many boaters believe that our educational program is just the public course they took years ago. To address this situation, the bridge has decided to take our GPS seminar directly to the public in hopes that it will spur new membership.

It'll be 18 May from 1900 - 2100 at Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. It's free to USPS member, and only \$25 for non-members. You'll be impressed with the enhancements made to this course last spring. It's designed to walk you through a basic understanding of the GPS system, a refresher on latitude and longitude, and the operations and functions of both handheld GPS units and full-featured chart plotters. I encourage you to attend and invite your boating associates. Contact me at 703 818-5364 (day), 703 437-0064 (evening) or by e-mail at gjaynelson@aol.com.



Lt/C Martha J. Dodd, P

ADMINISTRATION

The NVSPS Spring Family Picnic will be at the Fairfax Yacht Club on Saturday, 21 May. It's a potluck, \$5.00 per person, children under 12 free. We'll be performing Vessel Safety Checks all day as well. NVSPS will furnish hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, drinks, and trimmings. Reservation form and directions are in this newsletter.

Joel Bailey is our Cruise Coordinator. The NVSPS Summer Cruise is 24-30 June; complete cruise and marina information is on page 7 of March and April oT&Ts.

Participating in a squadron activity is always fun, and assisting in a Basic-Boating registration and/or exam is especially great. You'll feel good because you're helping someone to be a better boater as well as helping out our squadron. We'll soon be needing your help: call Jay Nelson or me if you can assist.

Vessel Examiner News

Our Squadron participates with the Coast Guard Auxiliary in conducting Vessel Safety Checks (VSC). In 2004 we examined over 240 vessels and were recognized as having performed the most VSCs in District 5. This was a result of the combined efforts of our 16 Vessel Safety Examiners.

VSCs are performed on recreational boats under 65 feet. Requirements parallel federal regulations for equipment and safety conditions of the vessel and are designed to improve the knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors of boaters. Join your fellow squadron members to increase your knowledge, provide a needed and valued community service, and have a lot of fun on the water. If you would like to become a Vessel Safety Examiner, please contact Elaine Colen at elsc97@aol.com

"CAPTAIN'S CORNER"

Spring commissioning is here. While mistakes are more often a headache than an emergency, there are some things you should be aware of. Let's test your knowledge on resolving commissioning mistakes.

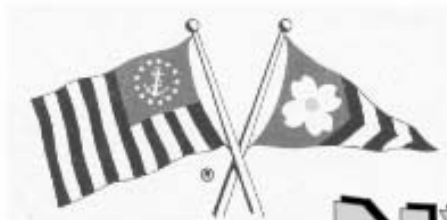
1. You step aboard your 31 foot express cruiser and begin opening her up for the season. Before you start your engines you need to _____.
 - a. Check the condition of your batteries
 - b. Run the blowers to vent the bilge
 - c. Open the seacocks to the engines
 - d. All of the above

2. You have a 20 foot runabout with an outboard motor. You've just launched at the local boat ramp, tied up, and gone to pay your ramp fee. When you return, you discover the drain plug is still on the dash of your boat and the boat is almost completely submerged, but the lines seem to be holding fast. Can you untie the lines?
 - a. No, the boat will sink
 - b. Yes, the boat will self-bail
 - c. Yes, the boat will remain level and not sink
 - d. None of the above, get professional help

3. OK, you have the boat back up out of the water. If this was in fresh water and the outboard wasn't completely submerged, should you try to start it?
 - a. Yes, as soon as possible
 - b. No, you will damage internal engine parts
 - c. Only if the computerized EFI system doesn't appear to be wet
 - d. A and C above



answers on page 5



NVSPS Spring Family Picnic

And Annual

Vessel Safety Check

Where: Fairfax Yacht Club
10721 Old Colchester Rd.
Mason Neck, VA 22079

Pot Luck Dinner
Hamburgers & hotdogs w/trimmings,
chips and drinks will be provided. On
the reservation form, please indicate
what food you will be bringing.

Date: 21 May 2005
1200 - 1700

Price: \$5.00 per person
Children under 12 - Free

Time: VSCs 1000 - 1700
Meal 1300 - 1430



Reservations needed BEFORE 14 May 2005

Mail to: Lt/C Martha Jane Dodd, P, 7900 Frost Crystal Ct, Fairfax Station, VA 22030
Tel: 703-239-0551 or email at ej.mj.dodd@starpower.net

Item bringing _____

Number attending: _____ @ \$5.00 each _____





The Sailor's Experience

A SMALL BOAT IN A LARGE OCEAN

PART I OF III

Sailing the Bahamas had gotten in my blood by 1971. Sid, the owner of the Bermuda 40 I had sailed in for 6 weeks, had personal problems and no invitation came. But I had my own boat built for ocean waters, Flicka Sköal. I could trailer it down to Ft Lauderdale and sail across the gulf stream. I discovered that the dock master here had disposed of my original trailer, but after some heated discussions he agreed to build a new one. It was heavy and wooden and required lifters for my Ford station wagon. The only way to Florida was US 17 over the old thin and very high bridge into Charleston. A test of one's nerve.

It's hard to find crew for a small boat for 6 weeks in the ocean. Finally I found Craig, a spirited young apprentice who had never sailed but who thought it might be fun. While I drove he talked about how different everything was the further south we got; he'd never left Pennsylvania. I knew a boatyard that would lift the boat and store the trailer, but as soon as the boat was in the water, Craig dropped a container with all his money. I dove and found it and then we were off. Craig was violently seasick, so we went straight to the Miami Yacht Club and, using Sid's name, got a slip. But we had to be out by late afternoon. We were accompanied by a small USCG boat to port as swells began to mount near the ocean end of the causeway. Our boat handled well under sail with plenty of pressure to steady it, but the USCG skiff was swamping and turned back. Out at sea the wind was blowing from the SSE 40 knots or better. Wind in the direction of the gulf stream caused big swells, so I decided to anchor off Fowery Rock, a USCG station several hundred yards off the coast and sail to Bimini in the morning. We let out all 200 feet of anchor line in 15 feet of water. I ate dinner in the well while Craig stayed below.

I must digress here. For safety and navigation I had installed a radar reflector on the mast spar, carried an Apelco radio direction finder, two life jackets, and a small compass attached to the bottom of the well. I'd also purchased a ship-to-shore radio, which I'd never used. On board, tucked into a side well compartment, was my Avon Red Start inflatable and 2 hp Sea Gull engine and spear fishing gear. Oh yes, I had current charts of the east coast and the Bahamas.

By 0200 I'd had enough of rolling around the cockpit and with Craig as sick as anyone could be, I hoisted the main, pulled in the anchor, raised the jib, and sailed eastward pointing halfway toward Cuba. This was a gut feel on how to compensate for the gulf stream flowing north (a 22-footer's hull speed is only a few knots, about the same as the gulf stream). About 2 hours out, a blinding light flooded the boat; I could feel its heat on my face. A large freighter was passing to the north. I felt the engines throb, and I could almost feel the spray. I guess they were wondering what I was and what I was doing. Good thing for a sharp

lookout and the radar reflector, or was I just lucky? Some time late morning, with wind blowing in my face and an exhilarating up and down feeling, Craig peeked out, asked if we were there yet, and then disappeared. By mid afternoon I thought a check with the radio finder would help locate us. It worked. The Bimini B - ... came in loud and clear about mid portside.

Around 1800 Craig appeared, "Where's Bimini?" I pointed to the left and he said, "Well, head that way then."

My course worked out just right; we soon entered the passage to North Bimini, cleared customs flying the yellow Q flag, received our transire and headed toward Cat Cay. After Cat there is a 60-mile stretch to the northwest channel beacon near Andros Island, our first destination. Water is no deeper than 20 feet and the bottom is covered with green growth. About halfway there I could go no further; I dropped anchor and slept. Rested, we had a pleasant sail to a little cabana on a sandy beach with a short dock for two boats. They were both occupied, so we anchored Mediterranean style: one anchor fore and one aft. I don't remember the cabana's name, but from the Bahamas' guide book: "some of the coastal settlements, such as Staniard Creek, are extremely picturesque and it would take no flight of fancy to imagine yourself transported to a South Pacific atoll." This must have been where we were.

First thing next morning, before I knew what was happening, Craig found an airstrip at Nicholl's Town and was off for Pennsylvania. I was to sail alone for the next six weeks.

D/Lt Charles H. Olin, AP

Got a boat tale worth telling?

Share your triumphs and hair-raising adventures with fellow squadron members. Send yours to *of Tars & Terns*:
psoballe@yahoo.com

CAPTAIN'S CORNER ANSWERS

1. D – All of these steps are required
2. C – USCG requires all boats up to 20 feet have flotation that will keep them level in the water
3. A – Even if the EFI system is wet, you need to get fresh gasoline and oil circulating through the engine to protect it and express the water.



NVSPS weather display at D5's Spring Conference



2nd Wednesdays at 1930 (any changes posted herein and on the web)
 at BoatUS 880 S. Pickett St., Alexandria

From I-495 take Van Dorn Exit #173 (old #3) north.
 Turn Left on S. Pickett

Or.. From I-395 take Duke St. Exit #3 east, turn right on Van Dorn.
 Turn right on S. Pickett.

Then... Go less than 1/2 mile and turn in at the BoatUS sign.
 Enter from the lighted parking lot behind the building.

MONTHLY ALL-HANDS MEETING



America's Boating Club

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