



## *How Will You Spend the Holidays During the Pandemic?*

This 2020 holiday season poses many challenges for everyone. It seems the way we would ordinarily enjoy the holidays with family and friends is now discouraged or prohibited by COVID-19 restrictions. It's difficult to host people for dinner while keeping everyone 6 feet apart – as required by social distancing. How large must your Christmas tree be to gather around and remain a safe distance?

In our squadron, many of our members are “of a certain age,” which puts them in the most vulnerable group. Special care must be taken. We all need to be reasonable, but we still want to enjoy the holidays. Even the way we travel is impacted. There are many suggestions and recommendations you can find online to make your holiday season safe and enjoyable. This is not a one size fits all proposition, so you should consider your specific circumstances in order to do what's best for you and your family and friends.

Whatever it is you decide to do, we wish you and yours a safe, healthy, happy and COVID-free holiday season!

By Lt Denise Robinson

**Guess who this is.**

**Hint: A Member-At-Large...  
on the Potomac River. P. 6**

## **Everyone! Attend the January 12 General Membership Meeting by Computer or Phone**

Attend our meeting January 12th at 7:30 pm via video conference or phone. An email with the secure link and phone number for Zoom will be sent out days before the meeting. The meeting will open

*Zoom Zoom!*

before 7:30 pm for everyone to fine tune their computer settings and socialize. More on page 9.





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**Meeting Info.** If you do not receive an email notice about meetings, please contact a bridge officer to confirm meeting will be held before heading out.

**General Membership Mtgs** are at Alexandria Police HQ Community Rm, 3600 Wheeler Ave, Alexandria, VA 22304, 7:30 pm, until further notice, are:

- on the **2nd Tues of each month** except no mtgs in Aug. and Dec.
- The May and Oct. mtgs are combined with other events on different days., normally Spring Picnic and Fall Picnic on Saturdays.

**Executive Committee Mtgs**, 7 pm: by Conference call or new location. Contact Executive Officer for conference call number and codes or location. Normally 4th Wed. of each month. There are speaking procedures for these meetings to be sure business has time to be discussed. Just ask about them.

**Zoom Meetings:** Login info for mtgs via Zoom or other mtg software will be distributed by email and available from Bridge Officers.

Please see previous issues online. If you do not have internet access, ask the editor to mail you a copy. For more information about anything in this newsletter, contact editor@nvsp.org

Find us on 

We have 306 likes!

### MEMBERS AT LARGE– contact us about any issue or for us to bring project plans to the Executive Committee

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Facebook Team:	Lt Claire Wyngaard, P and P/C Alan Hart, AP

## of Tars & Terns

The official publication of the  
**Northern Virginia Sail and Power Squadron**  
**America's Boating Club Northern Virginia**  
Posted online in color at [www.nvsp.org](http://www.nvsp.org)



**Articles, opinions and advertisements do not necessarily reflect USPS® policy or endorsement unless so designated**

Of Tars & Terns is published ten months of the year and mailed or emailed to all NVSPS members. July/August and January/February issues are combined. All Of Tars & Terns newsletters are published online at NVSPS.org in color. Submission deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to the issue month (or 15th of first issue month in combined issues) until further notice.

**Volume LIII; Number 10: December 2020**

### EDITOR

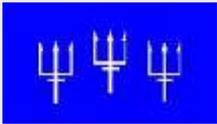
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## Message from the Commander



Mid November 2020



Ahoy!

Thanksgiving greetings to you all! I am thankful that even though this has been a crazy year, so many of us were able to get together for our Fall picnic at Leesylvania. The weather held out, and it ended up being a beautiful day.

Our newest Vessel Safety Examiner Doug Craig shares how he sought out to be certified on page 4. A perfect example how volunteering makes a difference. One of our newest members, Denise Robinson floated a kayak for the first time. A joy to hear about. Remember your first time? It's nice when first experiences can be enjoyable. We can make it happen.

With the boating season coming to a close, once you are done winterizing your vessel, consider taking the opportunity during these cold months to brush up and expand upon your boating education! We are coming close to 2021, and I hope that it's a great new year for all of us.

I want to wish everyone a Happy Holiday season, smooth sailing, and I hope to see everyone on the water next spring!

Commander Sowers

Commander@TeamSowers.com

Share Your Stories and Photos! See your name in lights, I mean, print!

Email your idea to Editor@NVSPS.org to start a conversation.

### *Visit the NVSPS Ship's Store*



For our burgee on duffel bags, hats, polos shirts, dress shirts, jackets and fleece. They put our logo on whatever they sell! Great prices and shipping deals!



**Also Burgee ordering info at <http://nvsp.org/stor.shtml>**

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## Doug Craig: My Path to Becoming a NVSPS Vessel Safety Examiner

by Doug Craig, VSE

I have been a USPS Vessel Safety Examiner (VSE) for almost one year now and have thoroughly enjoyed doing VSCs at marinas in Virginia and Maryland. The opportunity to provide truly relevant safety information to both inexperienced and “saltier” boaters has been personally satisfying. As an added bonus, I have learned a lot about small and not-so-small vessels, and their owners. The amount of knowledge out there is astonishing and has been willingly shared (even by boaters with expired flares and no working horn or lights - “Hmm, guess I’d better get that fixed”).

I highly recommend becoming a VSE; experienced boaters have so much to offer the growing numbers of new boat owners who often have a lot of knowledge gaps and questions. To become a VSE, I contacted the US Power Squadrons and was guided to the online VSE program, which was very intuitive, and gave me the information I needed to complete the qualifying test,

*Continued on page 5*



Doug also volunteers at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s Oyster Restoration Center in Shady Side, MD when Covid permits.

A promotional banner with a blue and orange background. The text "Together, we make boating better." is written in white. Below it is a red location pin icon with a white logo. The text "SAVE THE DATE" is in white, followed by "December 1, 2020". Below that is "GIVING TUESDAY" in white. At the bottom is the "AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB" logo in red and blue, with the tagline "For Boaters, By Boaters\*" and a small boat icon.

To sign up for Giving Tuesday information, sign up here <https://www.giveabc.org/>

## **My Path—continued from page 4**

before joining Rich Unis at Fairfax Yacht Club for the practical training (just a day). The following week I was at Old Dominion Boat Club with Rich again, doing more VSCs, then 4 VSC days at Shipwright Harbor in Deale, MD for another set of checks. VSCs are a high-demand event, especially after people get to know they are available, and I expect to be busy in 2021.

Covid19 has slowed down activities a bit, but I look forward to a full slate of Vessel Safety Checks starting in early Spring next year, to get the 2021 Season off to a very safe start. I've already been approached by several Deale boaters, and the operator of a kayak rental company (Yes, we do Safety Checks for Paddle boats as well).

I have sought activities that keep me close to the water since I was a teenager. My first adventure on the water came when I was 14, with a Summer job as an Asst. Lock-keeper with the Thames Conservancy in Windsor UK (Good close quarters training). The following Summer had me working as a "mate" on several Thames passenger cruisers (with names like "Empress of India", and "Windsor Castle"). The next year I was in a 45-passenger tourist boat, and then skippering "Vos", a former Port of London Police launch converted to carry 10 passengers, with a very large Chrysler engine that enabled me to drive the Conservancy Officers crazy when I was in a hurry. (Waters were quieter and Regs. were a bit lax-er in the UK in those days).

At the tender age of 17 I joined the Royal Navy, as a weapons electrical tech., which skills took me around the world on 1 Frigate, 1 Depot Ship and 3 diesel submarines, visiting exotic places like Manila, Hong Kong, Mombasa, Corsica, Aarhus Denmark, and Halifax Nova Scotia, and Scotland.

After marrying into the US Dept of State, and several tours in the Middle East with my wife Georgia - Qatar (1 tour), Kuwait and Yemen (2 tours each) - we finally washed ashore in Alexandria VA, and started the long process of finding the right boat and a dog. We finally settled on a classic boat – an experienced Albin 27 diesel cruiser, which has kept us both happy and safe on the water since 2015, and kept me from hanging around on street corners, enlarged my toolbox to no end, and which, in 2016, introduced me to the VSC program, via a US Coast Guard Auxiliary VSE. We keep our boat at Shipwright Harbor Marina in Deale, MD. Feel free to come by and say hello.

We retired (kinda) almost 3 years ago, and we still don't have a dog, but that may change if I can find one that loves the water and can breath diesel.

I'm glad that I fulfilled my goal of becoming an Examiner. I enjoy passing on the knowledge others have taught me.

***Become a Certified Vessel Examiner and learn  
how to conduct Vessel Safety Checks***

***Study Manual is Available Online***

**[http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=v\\_dept](http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=v_dept)**

**Contact P/C Rich Unis, JN at 703-777-8378 or  
skipperunis@gmail.com**



## On This Day in NVSPS History... By Lt Denise Robinson

On Saturday, October 24, 2020 at Leesylvania State Park in Woodbridge, Virginia, I experienced my very first nautical journey as a member of the Northern Virginia Sail and Power Squadron. Because the park is on the Potomac, Claire Wyngaard brought her kayak to enjoy the water before the meeting began. With Claire's guidance, I took to the river after the meeting.

Claire gave instructions on where to put my feet and adjust the feet stoppers, where to place your hands on the paddle so you can feel



*Monarch on the Beach* by Lena Sowers



they are in the right place all the time, how to push the kayak from the shore from the beach once you are in it, and of course, a life jacket was provided.

Once under way, navigating was a little awkward initially. With Claire's continued coaching, it was smooth sailing! I was moving forward, going in reverse, avoiding swimmers – everything was even keeled. What gave me the most confidence were her immortal words, "You're in control."

Hopefully, this was only the first of my many nautical adventures as we all look to return to nearby rivers for our sailing pleasure. As Commander Sowers said, "See you on the water!"

## Join the Sea Scouts

Sea Scout units – called ships- are established all across the country on oceans, bays, rivers, and lakes. They provide limitless opportunities and exciting challenges that you won't find anywhere else. Sea Scouts is a place to grow and learn, find adventure, and build long lasting friendships. Programs for young men and women ages 14-20. Visit <https://www.seascout1942.com/>



## Lovely Day at Leesylvania State Park on the Potomac, October 24

Members of the Squadron were able to finally come together in the same physical space in October to enjoy a picnic at Leesylvania State Park in Woodbridge, VA. We took advantage of the opportunity to have our membership meeting while picnicking. The turnout was good and it was nice to see everyone who attended. Our pavilion was naturally outfitted with fall décor and Claire Wyngaard made sure to have our official Squadron burgee welcome members to our shelter.

Everyone wore masks and brought their own individually packaged food. Drinks were provided. Our pavilion had our own grill that was used. The weather was a little chilly, but it was a nice clear day. Leesylvania State



Park is on the Potomac River, so there were beautiful views all around.

During the membership meeting, Commander Sowers gave the group an overview of administrative affairs and shared with us his hopes of our Squadron being more interactive as we come out of the pandemic.

Past Commander Charles Hurley was presented a plaque in recognition of his service by Commander Sowers. The committee members gave updates on all the usual matters of business. We were pleasantly surprised that P/R/C Bill Eldridge, SN joined us at the picnic, because he recently lost his wife Kathy. He was in good spirits and it meant a lot for us to share our condolences with him personally, as Kathy will be missed by the membership. He gave us

encouragement to keep the squadron active and involved with teaching.

To take advantage of the serene waters at the park, Claire came equipped with her kayak and gave me my first kayaking experience which was great fun! Overall, a good time was enjoyed by all at our picnic/membership meeting and the autumn weather was very invigorating.



Our beach for the day from the water.

By Lt Denise Robinson



## Fall District 5 Educational Conference – Newsletter Editor Meeting

A Newsletter Editor meeting was part of the 2020 America's Boating Club District 5 Educational Virtual Conference.

Across the board, it seems most editors are scrambling to fill their Squadron's newsletter. Particularly during this pandemic, editors have had to be creative and think out-of-the-box when our number of events and classes we can offer have been reduced. I am glad our squadron has kept up with each scheduled issue. Several editors shared ideas they've used to keep publishing. Some of the recommendations include:

- Remind members of their Membership benefits from our national website. (We don't do this enough)
- Post a Calendar of Events (invitations, Zoom calls, etc.) as an easy reminder
- Add Nautical trivia (We want contributions from you!)
- Share information about member activities outside of boating. We are not JUST boaters after all. (again we can't make this up—they need to come from you)
- Acknowledgement of members who are essential workers (e.g., first responders). We can't thank them enough! (Tell us a story you'd like to share.)

We were invited to get ideas from other Squadrons newsletters to see what may work for our group. I learned that we are allowed to reprint pictures from the US Coast Guard Auxiliary photo library with credit. The meeting was quite informative and I'm happy Alan and I were able to attend.

By Lt Denise Robinson

To request a boating course, contact NVSPS Educational Officer Lt/C Dean Markussen, AP  
MMarkussen2@comcast.net, 703-751-9178

### *December Birthdays!*

December		January	
Nancy Dando	1	Gardenia Kross	1
Walter Lazear	2	Gale Alls	1
Charles Hurley	15	Claire Wyngaard	13
Cathleen Sheffield	27	Sue Karjala	17
Evelyn Alls	28	Tom Martin	22
Susan Gallagher	31		



**America's Boating Club National site:**

<https://americasboatingclub.org/>

**Mid-Atlantic District site:**

<https://abc-midatlantic.org/>

**NVSPS—ABC Northern Virginia site:**

<http://nvsp.org/>

**Americas Boating Channel**

**Safe Boating Education Videos:**

<https://americasboatingchannel.com/>

## Many thanks to our faithful crew!

Chief Commander Mary Paige has presented merit marks to 18 of our members who contributed their time and effort to Northern Virginia Sail & Power Squadron in 2020. The members listed below kept the good ship NVSPS on course and sailing along, even through a pandemic. Thank you, one and all.

Evelyn Alls  
Gale Alls  
Thomas Ballew  
Douglas Craig  
Jean Durgin  
Richard Durgin  
Sean Gallagher  
Alan Hart  
Charles Hurley

Sue Karjala  
Walter Lazear  
Dean Markussen  
Denise Robinson  
Cathleen Sheffield  
Patrick Sowers  
Richard Unis  
Claire Wyngaard  
Frederick Zugay



Jean Durgin  
Merit Mark Chair



**Continued from page 1**—If you are new to Zoom and wish to practice with a person, contact an Executive Committee or visit the Zoom Help Center to watch video tutorials here <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>. Please don't hesitate to call a fellow member for help before the meeting. We will try to answer questions or practice if needed.

**Please check your Member Profile** online by going to: <http://nvsp.org/mem.shtml> - scroll down to your name, click on your name, follow more update links. Your record will tell you if your email address is valid. To make changes click on bottom Update link.



## Please help us have more fun!

The **Facebook Team** is looking for an additional member who enjoys looking for a variety of boating, interesting and fun posts to share on the Squadron Facebook page. Email or call the Editor.

Contact info on page 2.

Find us on 



**Next newsletter deadline is January 15, 2021**



**ABCNV—December 2020**

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**of Tars & Terns**



January 12, Meeting

