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## At the Helm

It's tricky coming up with an “At the Helm” for the Berkshire Log. I give a lot of credit to past commanders who seemed to be able to do it so easily. It is work for me to write a message that you would read, especially, because of the way my mind/hand connection works.

What can I say about the first few months of me at the helm? I've been really, really busy. At the beginning of August, I attended the D2 Summer Council and later in the month the USPS Governing Board in San Diego. Berkshire

Sail & Power Squadron was represented by our SEO, Carl Filios and myself. Lots of information was given out both at the Council and at San Diego. The dues increase which was scheduled for December 1<sup>st</sup> will be \$4 instead of the planned \$2. With the budgetary shortfalls due to lots of causes like membership loss – lack of people taking courses, the only option USPS has to meet the shortfall is to increase dues to \$4. My opinion (and only mine) is the benefits I get out of membership in USPS are worth a lot more – probably USPS sells themselves short for everything they offer. Don't we have the absolute best educational programs in the world? Aren't the Member Benefits we can use phenomenal? Just one of the member benefits I've used has saved me so much money (about \$250) – what's an additional two in dues?

It's ironic we have a shortfall in education because most members joined for education and stay members for the friendships as the USPS tag line says: **“Come for the Boating Education...Stay for the Friends.”** Why haven't we signed up for courses and seminars? If you can answer that, USPS will have a big reward to hand you!

But getting back to Berkshire Sail and Power Squadron, we had a terrific land and sea Fall Rendezvous in Stonington, CT. One of the best locations and a terrific Friday night dinner. I must recommend to you the Lobster, Mac & Cheese at the Dog Watch Café – excellent! Lots of great boating conversation – sea stories, some true, some unbelievable, some hysterical – too bad no pictures of the stories!

Next social event is a “Just Fun – No Boats” event (see page 4) – our Party Hardy Admin. Officer, Mike has a lot of good stuff up his sleeve. We're also searching for GEO's (see page 5). Plus the Seamanship course starts October 8. John Holden is working out details for our Public Boating class as we had to cancel the two day event this summer. If you know people who are interested, please let John or me know.

Pete Samsel is a dynamo (*editor's note: real exaggeration!*) – pushing all of us to do stuff for the Berkshire Log. Have we peaked your interest? We're just starting! This is your Squadron and we want you to be informed and come join us. First, the geodetics await! We want to keep you informed and **“Keep Berkshire Alive and Have Lots of Laughs and Fun Doing It!”**. Join in the mission – as the commercial says **“Try it, You'll Like It!”**  
**Susan Darcy, JN**



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*Berkshire Log*

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*The opinions expressed in "The Log, by the Editorial Staff or Contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Berkshire Sail and Power Squadron or those of the United States Power Squadron.*



**BSPS Info Line**  
**413-266-1130**

Do you know that we have an informational telephone line? Call to learn details of upcoming events. Refer your boating buddies for information on upcoming on Public Boating classes and

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**In LIVING COLOR at:**

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**BSPS & USPS CALENDARS**

**September 27 - Geodetic Marks Search, 1 PM, start at 75 Glory Drive**

**October 8 - Seamanship Class begins, First United Methodist Church, Pittsfield, 6:45 PM**

**October 13 - Executive Meeting at Zucco's Restaurant, Dinner 6 PM, Meeting 7 PM**

**October 17 - D2 Fall Conference, Fishkill, NY**

**November 10 - Executive Meeting at Zucco's Restaurant, Dinner 6 PM, Meeting 7 PM**

**October 24 - "Just Fun - No Boats", 2 PM, meet at Furnace Brook Winery at Hilltop Orchard in Richmond**

**December 8 - Executive Meeting at Zucco's Restaurant, Dinner 6 PM, Meeting 7 PM**

**January - The "After the Holidays" Party (date to be determined)**

**February 2016 - trip to New England boat show**  
**May 15, 2016 - Rivers, Locks, and Lakes seminar**

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Berkshire-Sail-and-Power-Squadron/528850690570303?ref=hl>

**Berkshire Sail & Power Squadron**

**Forty One Years of Service to Boaters**

1974 - 2015

***Please Remember...***

All members are requested to notify our commander or editor of the death of any other member or a member's family as soon as possible. We want to express our condolences in a timely manner and we need the help of all our members to this end.

## From the Mouth of Moby Dick (The Squadron's Mascot)



### *Miscellaneous Snips - Quotes overheard at the Spring and Fall Rendezvous, and the last meeting of the Berkshire Leadership Team (BLT)*

- Can you imagine? She is a third grade teacher – she got out of school today!
- Does she really think she can draw?
- I cannot believe that is clam chowder even if it is Rhode Island clear – it looks like onion soup!
- So where are the boats? How did everyone get here? Are your dinghies tied up?
- What do you mean it isn't hard?
- Look at all the mussels – Leo has more mussels or is that muscles than Frank!
- Did you see the length of that table? Wow are there really that many of us?
- So the **BLT** is working again? What's a geodetic? And how are we to find them?
- What is a Just Fun – No Boats?
- Will **SHE** ever shut up?
- The food is great – Lobster Mac and Cheese? Who would have thought!
- Don't forget, **BLT** stands for the Berkshire Leadership Team!
- Interested – you can be the voice of Moby – come to the meeting Tuesday October 13<sup>th</sup> at Zuccos. Dinner 6 PM (1800) – meeting at 7 PM (1900).

### **Get Involved – Just Jump In!**



## News From the SEO

Seamanship will be offered on Thursday evenings from 6:45 to 8:45 at the First United Methodist Church on Fenn Street in Pittsfield starting on October 8. Various instructors will participate. Please either register through the USPS web site or contact Carl Filios so books may be ordered. Cost is \$60/\$120 for members/non-members. Families can share materials.

Don't miss the plans for searching for geodetic marks later in the LOG!

Plan ahead. Reserve Sunday May 15 for the Rivers, Locks, and Lakes seminar. We will go aboard a Sacandaga squadron's members 42 ft. boat for a trip from the Schenectady Yacht Club through the locks on the Mohawk River and down the Hudson River to a yacht club in the Catskill area where the boat spends the summer. You will get to handle lines as we go through the locks. This trip is open to multiple squadrons, and could fill up fast. It will be an all day activity. Please contact me if you're interested. We will order the seminar material in advance, discuss the material prior to the trip, and have a review session at the end of the trip.

Contact Carl Filios (413) 822-9119 or [cefilios@verizon.net](mailto:cefilios@verizon.net) for additional information or to register.

**Carl Filios, SN**

## Summer & Fall Events - 2015

Our summer events were a fun time for all who attended. We first met up on Wednesday, July 8, 2015, at 6:00 PM, where members from BSPS met on Onota Lake for a fabulous concert put on by Who Are You, a Who tribute band. The event had approximately 18 attendees who shared food, drinks, stories and laughs. We had a total of four boats rafted together.

Then on Saturday, August 8, 2015, at 6:00 PM, members from BSPS meet at Onota Boat Livery for a festive dock party. We had approximately 20 attendees (members and families) who enjoyed burgers, dogs, a variety of salads including a spaghetti salad, and desserts. The dock party allowed for a relaxing evening while the sun set.

Both events were a great time for those who attended, and it is our hope that we will be able to do similar events for next year.

Our future events are still in the making, but we have some fall events ready for your enjoyment.

On Sunday, September 27, we have a Geodetic Marker Search, as described on page 5.

On Saturday, October 24, we have a "Just Fun - No Boats" event, as described on page 4.

There will be no events during the months of November and December. We will have our after holiday party in January. The date and location will be announced.

**Mike Jezak, AP**

## Report of the Fall Rendezvous, September 11<sup>th</sup> to September 13<sup>th</sup>

The Fall Rendezvous was a land and sea rendezvous – four by sea and five by land at Stonington, CT. We all met up at the Dog Watch Café at Dodson’s Marina for drinks and dinner on Friday. We were really lucky as they sat us on the porch where we had lovely cool breezes both by fan and nature.

The amount of laughter and stories almost made us forget to order dinner! But never fear, we did – there was a lot of checking out everything everyone else had ordered. Some only had appetizers – one person had two appetizers instead of a main course! We all indulged in lots of boating talk – a real bunch of good and bad experiences – who did what when – and a boom story!

Then it was time for dessert – we decided after one of the desserts was passed around with extra forks, the Wendy’s special dessert was the best. After dinner, we stood around outside still talking. Don’t you know that there is always just one more boating story. Then the five by land went back to their lodging to have more time with lots more stories and the four by boat did the same thing.

On Saturday, the sea people went to find quahogs and mussels (very few they said) and according to the report had a dinghy race. According to sworn testimony, Frank and Tena DeBaggis won the dinghy race but there are no supporting pictures!

If you weren’t part of the nine, make a note that boats large and small, land vehicles with paddle crafts or by themselves are welcome – we’ll do it again next year usually the last weekend in June (to avoid 4<sup>th</sup> of July). We’re in the planning stages now – ideas and suggestions welcome – talk to P/C Kev Dinan and mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,

**Susan Darcy, JN**

## “Just Fun - No Boats”

Our upcoming events include a “Just Fun - No Boats” day. This event will be held on Saturday, October 24, 2015, at 2:00 PM. The afternoon will begin with members meeting at Furnace Brook Winery at Hilltop Orchard in Richmond, MA, where for a minimal fee their award winning wines can be sampled. Depending on the weather apple picking would be optional.

After this first stop, some fun is needed, we will head to Ken’s Bowl in Pittsfield, MA. After which attendees can join us at a place later determined for some drinks and dinner. Please RSVP to Michael Jezak at 413-212-2193 (leave a message) or [Mikejezak@gmail.com](mailto:Mikejezak@gmail.com) prior to Wednesday, October 21, 2015.

## When Was the Last Time You Fed a Giraffe?

When I was in San Diego in August for the Governing Board meeting, I had the opportunity to visit the Safari Park, associated with the San Diego Zoo. The park is actually over half an hour from the zoo, out in the country. The park visit was arranged by friends who are associated with the Brevard County Zoo in Florida. Denise Terry and I accompanied our friends to the park, and went on the “Deluxe Caravan Tour”, consisting of almost four hours in an open truck, driving among the animals – well not all of them – we didn’t drive through lions or tigers.

Part of the tour is an opportunity to feed a giraffe. The giraffes are used to it, and the tour guide has a bunch of buckets of leaves, which the giraffes like. We all had the opportunity to feed the giraffes some leaves and take pictures of each other feeding them. I also had the opportunity to feed a rhinoceros, but passed on that.

Note that included is a picture of Past District Commander Denise Terry, seemingly engaged in negotiations with a giraffe about more leaves.

Something else of interest in San Diego is that it’s the home of the US Pacific Fleet. I saw a couple of aircraft carriers and some other ships – basically across the bay from the hotel. The carrier Midway is now a floating museum, and was right near the hotel. Unfortunately, I didn’t have time to check it out.

**Carl Filios, SN**



## CPR/First Aid Class

For members wishing to take a first aid and CPR class please contact Michael Jezak at 413-212-2193 (leave a message) or [Mikejezak@gmail.com](mailto:Mikejezak@gmail.com). Once we have a few members wishing to attend, a time and place will be determined. The cost to members will be \$15.00 per person.

## Searching for Geodetic Marks!

Do you know what a **geodetic mark** is? Have you used a GPS on land – other than your car GPS? Part of the United States Power Squadrons educational program includes GPS.

As part of the United States Power Squadrons Cooperative Charting Program we can look for and report geodetic marks. These are round disks usually set in stone, that were put in (in most cases) quite a few years ago to mark latitude and longitude of a particular location.

We will be organizing a “search party” to locate some in this area. We will meet, divide up into teams, take a stack of locations, and go searching. We need to take pictures of what we find for reporting purposes.

The date is Sunday afternoon, September 27. We will meet at 1 PM at Carl’s house (75 Glory Drive), divide into teams that will each take an area, a GPS, and a stack of sheets that tell us the latitude and longitude, as well as additional information. A map will be provided that gives the general area of the marks. GPS units (and instructions) will be provided to those who don’t have one. We will meet at 5 PM to report findings and get them reported.



## In Memoriam

We are saddened to hear of the passing of John Bodnar on August 4, 2015. John joined the Penfield Power Squadron in 1967, and later transferred to the Berkshire Sail and Power Squadron. He will be missed.



*Ask Mr. Melville*

Got a question about BSPS or USPS? Not certain what to do? Send a note to Mr. Melville.

Dear Mr. Melville. I have to admit I was impressed with the Land/Sea Fall Rendezvous but wonder what happened to the Dinghy Races?

Signed: *A Little Dinghy*

Dear “Little”: Although I wasn’t actually there (was home on Holmes Road), I understand that the race supervised by unbiased and truly honest members, a dinghy rowed by Tena and captained or directed by Frank (You know them as the DeBaggis) won the race! We don’t have any supporting evidence but that was attested to.

**Mr. M.**

Dear Mr. Melville, I’ve bought a boat! I need a lot of help - what do I do next? Do I need insurance - what course should I take? HELP - HELP - HELP!

Signed: *Am at Sea*

Dear “At Sea.”:

Congratulations - what a special event. What kind of boat did you buy? Come to the next meeting or event and either before, during or after, since we seem to talk a lot, tell us all about your new boat. No doubt someone will have a similar boat and we all will have lots of ideas and information to share. **Mr. M**

## In Memoriam



We are saddened to hear of the passing of Gordon Fiddes on August 3, 2015. Gordon had been an active member of the Berkshire Sail and Power Squadron, after joining in 1974. He earned the rank of Senior Navigator, and taught several classes. He will be missed.

## **Voluntary swimming, not by choice** **(Excerpt from the 2015 Maine Cruise Log)**

The 19<sup>th</sup> began like a normal Maine day. Foggy. Can't really complain because this is the first really foggy day that we have had on our cruise.

So we are leaving Mackerel Harbor on the east side of Casco Passage and this is an "instruments only" kind of day. No Kodak Moments at all. No wind either.

Motoring out to the main channel so we can head toward Northeast Harbor, we encounter a swath of lobster pots that are dense enough to walk to shore upon. So with zero visibility (well not quite, I could still see the bow) I was dodging pots, trying to stay on course, and checking the radar for targets.

Did I mention that the diabolical lobster men (and women) up here like to attach a "toggle" to their traps? This toggle is another float that is connected to the main float by a line that can be as long as 30 feet. This line floats below the surface where it is visible only to sailboat keels, props, and rudders. You must not drive between the main float and the toggle. If you do, then the connecting line will wrap around your keel if you are lucky. If you are unlucky, the line will slip around the keel and wind up around your prop shaft in a New York second. Make that a half-second. Nearly instantaneous if you are turning above 2000 rpm.

Now experienced Maine sailors, like I thought I was, understand how this game works. You watch for two floats- one colored with the unique pattern of the diabolical lobsterman, and the other with either a similar, complementary, or just plain white color. You look for the prevailing wind and/or current to determine the safer side to pass, and you look to see if the downwind/down-current float is laying more horizontal than the upwind/up-current one. That is the clue that these two floats are connected. If they are both semi-vertical, then they are not likely connected but independent which could suggest that you could pass between them.

So you're thinking, why not just play it safe and always pass down-wind/down-current? That is because there are so darn many of them it is hard to tell who may be connected to who. The stakes get raised a bit when the tide is high or the current is running fast because then the up-current toggle float gets pulled under the water and you can't even see it.

Did I mention that these diabolical lobstermen like to put these toggle-float systems in all the channels as well as everywhere else?

So to continue..... I'm motoring along watching all the floats and steering a zig-zag course that looks like I am drunk.

Then it happens.

Oh crap. I snag a connecting line and it winds up around my prop shaft pulling the float toward my side at 50mph. You simply can't get off the throttle fast enough. So after getting to neutral I do a 180 degree turn and idle in reverse hoping that the line will now un-wrap.

It doesn't.

In fact the line is now wound so tight that the prop is locked and I can't get forward rpm over 1000. My forward speed has dropped to 1.2 kts and thoughts of a very cold swim are entering my mind.

Now I see the problem. Not only did I pick up a connecting line between a toggle and main buoy, I actually picked up a connecting line in the middle of a string of pots.

Well, after 15 agonizing minutes of forward-reverse-forward-reverse, I am free. Sort of, that is. I am no longer connected to the infernal lobster pots, but I have significant vibration and I know that I have line wrapped around my shaft. More forward-reverse in attempt to loosen the load. It seems to work, the vibration is now much less. Not sure if it is gone completely.

I continue to Northeast Harbor. We spend two days there. I keep thinking about the prop, but I really don't want to go into the cold Maine water. So I am in denial hoping that all of the line is gone and the vibration I feel is "normal".

We leave NEH, again in the dead of fog, and motor to Campbell Island on the southwest side of Eggemoggin Reach. I decide I must go in the water. I have to be sure the prop is clear or clear it. As I feared, there was a wad of line around the prop and hub. It effectively jammed the prop so that the blades would not feather or go into reverse.

We rigged a line from one side of the stern to the other so that I could pull myself down to the prop. Using my hook knife I cut and ripped at the line taking pieces out until it was all gone.

This is the second time that I have used this hook knife to free us from lines that have snagged us. I can't say enough good things about this knife.

Below is the offending line and the "save my bacon" hook knife.



Rich Stidger, SN