



In This Issue

At the Helm

BSPS & USPS Calendars

Like Us on Facebook

From the Mouth of Moby Dick

District 2 Fall Conference

Educational Awards

Join Us For Post-Holiday Fun

Aids to Navigation (ATONs)

Seamanship Course
Completion

Upcoming Courses

Frank & Tena DeBaggis
Locator

Merit Marks

Ask Mr. Melville

New Senior Navigator



At the Helm

I cannot believe the boating season is over – it seemed much shorter this year. We've drained, filled, mothballed, shrink wrapped and winterized our babies so now the "dark" season is here. The season when there is only hard water!

What have we got left to look forward to? In my little inland circle, now is the time of parties, lots of goodies to graze on and very little boat talk. It's January when as I like to call it the hot stove gang rally round.



This hot stove gang is unofficial but we're the ones who look for courses and seminars to take or just plain coffee get-togethers so we can talk "boats"! We want to plan boat trips and rendezvous. We want to sign up for courses or seminars with our boating friends. We want to find out who has a new boat or is looking for a different boat. We want to "kick the tires" so we may even visit a few boat dealers or marinas and we definitely look forward to those "boat shows".

So now you know our secret what you probably already guessed – we like each other and like hanging out and talking boats especially when we can't actually boat. I was looking at the seminars – I know SEO Carl is going to offer the seminar "*Boating on Rivers, Locks and Lakes*" in the early Spring. I see one that sounds very intriguing: "Crossing Borders" since I'm thinking of doing the Canadian canal system. Another is "Hurricanes and Boats". What I know about the hurricanes is from when I lived on the coast and pulling boats was what we did for hurricanes. And of course the "Weather" seminar is another good one.

Will you join me and others and take a course or seminar? Let's face it, we all share boating withdrawal – it is so much fun to tell boating stories – like no boom or how do you know there is a big rock in Onota? Anyway let our SEO know what interests you, and let me know if you just want to kick tires or get a coffee. It is like the ad where the guy tells others about the big fish he struggled to catch for seven hours – we have to be able to share our boating stories with understanding boating friends!

We want to keep you interested, informed and involved so we can "**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!**"

Hope you and yours have a wonderful Holiday and Happy & Healthy New Year!

Susan Darcy, JN

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 Peter Charpentier, S (3 yr)

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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

View, Download, and Print this issue and all back issues of the *Berkshire Log* in LIVING COLOR at:
http://www.usps.org/d2/d2_squadron_news.html



BSPS & USPS CALENDARS

- January 10 - The "After the Holidays" Party (see announcement later in this LOG)**
- January 12 - Executive Meeting at Zucco's Restaurant, Dinner 6 PM, Meeting 7 PM**
- February 9 - Executive Meeting at Zucco's Restaurant, Dinner 6 PM, Meeting 7 PM**
- February 15-21 - USPS Annual Meeting at the Rosen Centre in Orlando, Florida**
- February 21-28 - USPS Cruise to Western Caribbean, from Tampa**
- February 27 - D2 Winter Council at I84 Diner in Fishkill, NY**
- March 8 - Executive Meeting at Zucco's Restaurant, Dinner 6 PM, Meeting 7 PM**
- March (date TBD) - ABC Course**
- March (date TBD) - CPR Course**
- April 1-3 - D2 Spring Conference at Ramada Inn in Fishkill, NY**
- April (date TBD) - Change of Watch Event**
- May 15 - Rivers, Locks, and Lakes seminar**

Like Us on Facebook



Read informative articles about boating

See announcements for courses and social events

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

Berkshire Sail & Power Squadron

Forty Two 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 last Berkshire Leadership Team (BLT)

- So what is a Merit Mark? How can we estimate how much time we're going to spend doing Berkshire stuff between now and December 31st?
- Too bad we had to cancel "Just Fun, No Boats" – I was looking forward to tasting all those wines.
- Poppers – Mozzarella sticks – oops – the Poppers are **HOT!**
- **SHE** has Kevin doing the really hard work on Merit Marks!
- Will **SHE** ever shut up?
- Don't forget, **BLT** stands for the Berkshire Leadership Team! Definitely not Bacon, Lettuce & Tomato!
- Interested – you can be the voice of Moby too – come to the meeting Tuesday, January 12th at Zuccos. Dinner 6 PM (1800) – meeting at 7 PM (1900).

Get Involved – Just Jump In!



District 2 Fall Conference Educational Awards

Berkshire won a number of educational awards at the District 2 Fall Conference, held in Fishkill, NY on October 17. We won the Stamford-Doolittle Award, for the best teaching aid at the Fall Conference. That aid, pictured at left, is one of the aids we use for knot tying in ABC and Seamanship. Although it's simple, it meets the criteria of easy to replicate, inexpensive to build, and accomplishes the goal for which it is intended. It will be entered into the competition in Orlando in February. That competition features the best aid from each district.

We also won the Prince Henry Award, which is based on the number of completions of Junior Navigation and Navigation. Both John Holden and I completed Navigation during the educational year ending in June. Each of the two awards consist of a plaque, to which the name of the winning squadron is added each year. We will have to return the plaques at next year's Summer Council.

We also won the N Club Award. The N Club is composed of people who have completed the Navigation course. The local chapter awards three sextants each year (one each to districts 2, 3, and 4). The top award is a metal sextant, and the other two are plastic sextants. In general, the criteria are about the same as those used for the Prince Henry Award. We were fortunate, however, to win the metal sextant for top overall. This sextant becomes squadron property to keep. It will be available for use by those of you who take Junior Navigation or Navigation in the future.

I also received my Senior Navigator plaque.

Carl Filios, SN

Squadron Educational Officer SEO



Join Us For Post-Holiday Fun

When: January 10, 2016 at 3:00 PM

Where: Patrick's Pub, 26 Bank Row, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Please RSVP to Mike Jezak PRIOR to January 1, 2016.
Phone number 413-212-2193 or Mikejezak@gmail.com

Cost: \$0

Menu will be announced at a later date, but will consist of three hot entrees, salad, sides and of course some wings. There will be a cash bar in the room with a dedicated bar tender.



Aids to Navigation (ATONs)

The Coast Guard has published an article about potential ATONs that are completely digital in nature. That is, the ATON shows up on a chart-plotter screen like it was a real buoy or landmark except that it is digitally generated and not a real physical buoy. Here's a link to the article:

http://coastguard.dodlive.mil/2015/11/coast-guard-tests-digital-lightship-capabilities/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheCoastGuardCompass+%28The+Coast+Guard+Compass%29

Seamanship Course Completion

Congratulations to George Reynolds, who recently completed Seamanship.

Upcoming Courses

Once the holidays are over, we will begin winter course offerings. One possible offering will be the Weather course. It runs about 8 weeks, one night a week, two hours a night, and I believe it's possibly the best course we offer. It deals with everything from tornadoes to hurricanes to fronts and clouds. We could, however, offer a weather seminar instead. It would be one two hour class. It's obviously much less detailed, but provides basic knowledge.

Another possible offering is Piloting. We have a number of people who have not taken Piloting. This class runs about 8 weeks, and involves use of a GPS, as well as plotting courses on charts, which is a skill necessary for determining your position, should your electronics fail.

A third possibility is Instructor Development. This course is of value to anybody who has to address a group. It's a life skill, and doesn't involve any USPS-specific skills or background. It involves making a five, ten, and fifteen minute presentation in front of the class. The class members and instructor will critique each of the presentations, in order to help you improve your skills. At the end, you need to create a lesson plan for a one hour class, which will be graded by the course instructor and submitted to the USPS Instructor Development Committee. This course runs 4-5 weeks, one night a week.

An updated GPS seminar is under development. I'm hoping it will be released soon. Once it's available, we will offer that.

A fourth possibility is the Navigation Systems course. This is the third part of the Marine Electronics series (the other two are Marine Electrical Systems and Marine Communication Systems). This course uses the Canadian Power Squadron text, supplemented by US-specific material.

Descriptions of these courses are available on the USPS web site under the Education Department.

Please return the enclosed postcard, indicating what courses you're interested in and what nights you're available.

Carl Filios, SN

Squadron Educational Officer SEO

Frank & Tena DeBaggis Locator

Frank & Tena are on their way to Florida on their sailboat Mistress. You can log onto the following website to see their progress.

<http://share.findmespot.com/shared/faces/viewspots.jsp?glId=0dORn3nYRmMNoHLEtHRdI5OMUousEY29J>



Merit Marks

The only compensation active and family members receive for the substantial effort they personally perform that furthers the interests, programs and objectives of USPS, its districts and squadrons, is a merit mark awarded by the National Chief Commander. A member may receive only one merit mark in a calendar year regardless of the amount of work accomplished. A merit mark cannot be bought; actual personal service performed by the member is the criterion of work accomplished.

The following 17 members have earned a merit mark for 2015. The total number of merit marks held by all of our

Alfred L. Burbank, SN	John C. Holden, SN
Paula Dailey, P	Michael R. Jezak, AP
Thomas A. Dailey, JN	Frederick A. Mason, SN
Susan L. Darcy, JN	George E. Reynolds, S
Cynthia F. Dinan, AP	Leo O. Robillard, SN
Kevin J. Dinan, AP	Peter W. Samsel, AP
Carl E. Filios, SN	G. Richard Stidger, SN
Susan H. Gore, S	David L. Trudeau, JN
Richard E. Gore Jr., AP	

members is 326.

There are many more people that contribute substantially to our squadron that are not listed here. The reason for their absence is that they are not an active USPS member. For those people we are pleased to award a *Certificate of Appreciation* for their generous service.

Our squadron's metrics-

Total members = **49**

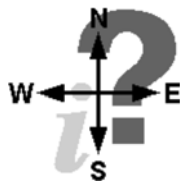
Members with 1+ merit marks = **28**

Senior members with 5+ merit marks = **18**

Life members with 25+ merit marks = **6**

Thanks to all for all that you do!

So you didn't get a merit mark this year? The guideline for qualification is 30 hours of work or more for the squadron. Simply attending a class or social event is not enough. Teaching classes, committee work, and helping to run social events will help you meet the guidelines.



Ask Mr. Melville

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

Dear Mr. Melville. Is Berkshire Sail & Power Squadron having a Holiday Party this year?

Signed: *Green Wreath*

Dear "Wreath": Because there are so many get-togethers during this time of year, we have our "After the Holiday Party" in January. There is probably an announcement of the details somewhere in this issue.

Mr. M.

***A Follow up for "At Sea"!** (see last LOG issue)*

Dear "At Sea.":

We missed you at the "Just Fun, No Boats". How's your new boat doing? We've got some great courses coming up and we have some open seats for you and your friends for the classes. We know at this time of year, we all need to polish and refresh our boating knowledge. And it gives us others to ask questions of - best launch spots, best fishing (well some will share, others not so much). So sign up and share.

Mr. M

New Senior Navigator

Congratulations to John Holden, who recently completed Cruise Planning, which was the last course he needed to pass to obtain the grade of Senior Navigator. He will receive a plaque at the 2016 District 2 Spring Conference.