

CROSS CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Cross County Power Squadron, a unit of the United States Power Squadrons®, District 2

Volume XLXIX

September-October

Number 2

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE — Howard A. Sklar, AP



Greetings. It has been a while since we last spoke to each other and many good things have happened for me and hopefully for you as well. The summer was wonderful and many days and nights were spent on the water, both cruising from here to there and fishing of course. Marcia and I journeyed to Puerto Rico towards the end of the summer and both learned a new and exciting activity. Snorkeling in the Caribbean. The majesty and beauty of the ocean below is unbelievably striking and exhilarating. I now know a small amount of the pleasures that others like Lt/C Peggy Howland, P, must enjoy. It has prompted me to want to learn and become certified in Scuba to take the excitement I felt to a higher level. On other news my daughter Maggie got married at the end of May and the wedding was abso-

lutely fantastic. She and her new husband (the only one) Mitch will reside in Washington, D.C., where they both practice law.

As for Squadron news:

The Commander's Cocktail Party (no cocktails served), Blessing of the Fleet, and Welcoming of the Summer months, held in June was well attended (24 people showed up) and everyone had a good time. Peggy was inspiring in her blessing and prayer. Members of the Westchester Sail & Power Squadron joined us in the fun and festivities. I want to personally thank Lt Joseph L. Pizzuti, AP, Lt/C Virginia P. Moore, P and Peggy Howland for insuring a good time for all.

The fall boating class will begin on Wednesday, September 30, 2009 at 7:30 PM at the New Rochelle Marina. We will be teaching the latest version of the course entitled "America's Boating Course" or ABC-3 as it is commonly known. Having perused the course (video driven) I found it to be more concise and better laid out than the previous video course. The graphics and slides are much more meaningful. It would be absolutely wonderful if you the membership could turn out for the first class to show our students (prospective members) what we are all about.

Which brings me to a common theme over my last year's commander messages. I have repeatedly asked for the membership to turn out to our meetings and events and show your faces and surprisingly more of you did. Now, I am challenging all of you to make an effort in this coming year to attend one meeting, one class night as a proctor or one Squadron event, in that way I could say that I personally saw all 50+ of you over this bridge year.

The Squadron's bylaws revision have been completed. For a copy for your perusal, contact me at the email below. The major changes are "what constitutes a quorum at an EXCOMM meeting".

I will be attending the D/2 Conference in Lake George the 23 & 24 October . If any of you have anything you want brought up or said on CCPS's behalf please let me know and I will surely bring it up for us. We all know how much I like to orate. If you do want to contact me my email is hasklar@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted.

NEWS FROM THE U.S. COAST GUARD

By [Bob Warren, The Times-Picayune](#)

September 28, 2009, 8:34PM

A grounded tanker is blocking deep-draft shipping traffic near the mouth of the lower Mississippi River, the Coast Guard said. The vessel is loaded with 602,000 gallons of crude oil, but is not leaking or taking on water, the Coast Guard said.

The [Coast Guard](#) said the vessel was expected to be ungrounded around 2 a.m. Tuesday.

A Coast Guard news release said only 35-foot draft or less vessels are allowed to transit past the grounded vessel one at a time.

The ship, Eagle Tucson, grounded in the shipping channel near [Pilottown](#) at 2:45 a.m. Monday.

A response boat from Coast Guard's station in [Venice](#) arrived on scene and detected no evidence of pollution. The Eagle Tucson's crew has not encountered signs of oil leaking or taking on water, the Coast Guard said.

#####

June Birthdays:

James J. Campbell, 1st
Robert E. Beardsley, 11th



August Birthdays:

Daniel W. Zygmunt, 10th
Donald A. Bernard, 22nd
Leah H. Campbell, 22nd
John Loperfido, 22nd
John F. Ferreri, Jr., 28th



September Birthdays:

Joseph J. Hvisc, 13th
Peggy E. Howland, 29th



October Birthdays:

Benjamin T. Parker, 9th
Edwin Fisher, 10th
John A. Wiegiers, 22nd
James H. Levi, 28th



2009-2010 Bridge

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT, Part I - P/C Arthur Steiner, P

Amazing picture is one I just saw of the Swiss America's Cup defender "Alinghi" flying in between two mountain-tops over Lake Geneva. An illusion? No. She was being air-lifted by helicopter into the lake, but the helicopter was no where to be seen in the picture! This led me to thinking about what's happening to sail racing. Why all the fuss about new types and design of these boats? It's really the skipper and crew who are racing, but now progress (?) has made the naval architect a major member of the competition. My opinion is that as long as the boats are "one design", it makes no difference what they are. For all that matters, they could be old scows. It's the personnel onboard are who are racing. Let's put common sense back into the "America's Cup" competition.

I recently wrote of manslaughter charges being leveled against a welder and his supervisor for faulty workmanship on the keel of a yacht, which lost the keel (and capsized, causing the drowning of four crew members. Now, I read about a manufacturer being sued for misrepresenting the tankage capacity of his boats. What's happening to pride in workmanship and truth in selling?

While I'm reflecting, I can't help thinking of the false values now in boat selling. It used to be that the age of a boat had little to do with its monetary value. The main considerations for buying were the physical condition of the vessel and how well it was equipped. Manufacturers have forced 'age depreciation' on us, as is common in the auto industry.

Possibly, "common sense" is staging a comeback. I note that the N.Y. Governor has withdrawn the proposed 5% sales tax on luxury boats. Then, the USCG has withdrawn its proposed security zone restriction from around Liberty and Ellis Islands in the N.Y. Harbor. Then, as last noted in a previous article, Florida's Governor gave an unequivocal "NO" for an off-shore liquid gas terminal. Now the N.Y. Department of Commerce has upheld the State's objection to the "Broadwater" terminal on Long Island Sound. Good for them!!

Now For some "bewarees." New York State's proposed budget includes a \$19.00 license for salt-water fishermen (\$40. for out-of-staters). Also are increased Marina Fees, State Park Fees and a lifting of the cap on State fuel taxes. What with unemployment on the rise, these changes will hurt those who least can afford extra expense. My solution? Cut the salaries of State Legislators!!

Part II

After reading about a yacht builder (Antaries Yachts) offering to sail the buyers of its 44' catamaran around Cape Horn, I'm reminded of my own experience going around that fabled nautical spot. Unfortunately, I didn't sail around the Cape, I was a passenger onboard a Chilean Naval Vessel. However the thrill of passing these notorious waters was thrill enough. And, by the way, I flew the CCPS burgee at the time. CCPS is in possession of this flag, along with a photo of it with the Cape in the background. Probably it's the only one in the entire USPS.

Again, those of you who have fiberglass fuel tanks, beware of the danger to the tank and your engine from the Ethanol addition. It's now being added at a 10% level, but our wonderful, for-profit, fuel companies are clamoring to be allowed to increase it to 15%. I read, with interest, that some 1.9 billion dollars of "stimulus money" is being directed to dredging some sadly neglected portions of the Intracoastal Waterway. Of interest to Northeasters, is that some \$1,280,000 will be used along New Jersey sections.

Maybe, somehow, they've read my numerous remarks pertaining to the ill chosen dates for the New York Boat Show. They've gotten down to common sense and have now scheduled this once popular event to 20-24 January. Christmas is past and people are thinking of the coming good weather and boating. Now', how about reducing the admission price, so that a person might have more to spend on a boat?

At this writing, I'm looking Forward to coming "North:" for a Few weeks, and I look forward to greeting you all at the Commanders' Cocktail Party - See you then!

The Blessing of the Fleet, a Centuries-old Tradition

Submitted by Lt/C Peggy E. Howland, P

A “Blessing of the Fleet” is held in many ports throughout the United States, often at the beginning of the boating season in May or June. It has been a longstanding tradition among commercial fishing fleets, such as those along the Gulf Coast.

One of the oldest blessings, held every year, originated in the French community by Saint Margaret Catholic Church at Bayou La Batre, Alabama, where the prayers are pronounced over the seamen, their boats and equipment. The petitions are similar everywhere in the world, asking for full nets or a good catch, and a safe return home for the crews.

A wonderful Ashanti prayer for blessing, from Ghana in West Africa, asks,
Bless the waters that flow through our land.
Fill them with fish and drive great schools of fish to our seacoast,
so that the fishermen in their unsteady boats do not need to go out too far.

The port of Kemah, Texas, 20 miles from Houston, hosts an annual “Blessing of the Shrimp and Pleasure Boat Fleet”, combining both the commercial enterprise and small boaters in one festival. Here, as in many places, it is a great community event to which crowds come for the festivities. These can include parades of boats on the water, parades in the town, contests, pageantry, gala dancing and feasting. One Gulf port has a gumbo competition each year, with a prize for the best gumbo.

The Blessing of the Fleet is held in coastal fishing communities throughout much of the world and is said to have originated in the Mediterranean to ensure a bountiful catch as well as safety on the water, where wind and waves, storms and other dangers may confront the mariners on their voyages. The rituals vary by community and range from a simple ceremony to multi-day festivals.

At Destin, Florida, the prayers recall that Jesus numbered the fishermen Peter, Andrew, James and John among his disciples. Two Psalms from the Hebrew Scriptures (or “Old Testament”) are popularly used at the Blessings. Psalm 104, verses 24-35, refers to ships at sea and the great sea monsters, “Leviathan” or whales. The story in Psalm 107, verses 23-32 (see below) tells of mariners tossed to and fro on the deck of their ship, praying for deliverance from the storm, which the Lord quiets in answer to their prayers, and brings them safely to harbor.

Sailors and passengers praying for safety from a storm at sea is a theme that occurs many times in the Bible. One famous incident occurs in the story of the prophet Jonah, who took a ship to Tarshish, deliberately heading in the opposite direction from where the Lord had instructed him to go. “But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. The captain came and said to him, ‘What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.’”

Just as each mariner cried to his own god in the story of Jonah, blessings of the fleet have been initiated by various communities of faith through the years. Immigrants to America from countries bordering the Mediterranean brought with them their seafaring occupations, while the immigrant churches brought the custom of blessing the fleet and praying for the boats and crews, each according to their own tradition. Today, many Blessings are sponsored by secular groups such as the local marine association, the town, or by coalitions of boating organizations and yacht clubs, including the Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Sail and Power Squadrons.

In Alaska, where Orthodox Christians are descended from the time the state belonged to Russia, the fishing boats are sprinkled with holy water at the start of the fishing season as the priest prays for the crews' safety and success. Orthodox Churches also have a ceremony of blessing the water, usually in January at the Feast of the Epiphany.

[Tarpon Springs, Florida](#), with the largest Greek population in the U.S., is known for its Greek Orthodox Epiphany ritual when a wooden cross is tossed in the frigid water, and the young men aged 16 to 18 dive to retrieve it. Whoever recovers it is said to be blessed for the whole year. This is the concluding ceremony of the blessing of the waters and the boats. The livelihood of the original Greek immigrants hinged around the sea and their boats in what used to be a highly risky job that included diving for sponges.

The Occoquan community in Maryland in 1999 revived an old tradition. The Blessing of the Fleet held there for many years had been discontinued. That year the Yacht Clubs of the Occoquan River got nearly 70 boats to participate, facilitated by the Occoquan Flotilla of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. The next year the number of vessels blessed more than doubled. Supporters more than doubled, too: the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Tow Boat U.S. (Potomac Marine), public safety crews, as well as many volunteers who donated spare time to collect and paint plastic milk jugs with orange paint to mark the route, then stayed behind to pull the markers back out of the water afterward.

(Continued on P. 6.)

COURSES & SEMINARS GIVEN BY WESTCHESTER SAIL & POWER SQUADRON AND CITY ISLAND POWER SQUADRON

COURSE	DURATION	BEGINS	LOCATION	CONTACT
<i>Boating Basic Class ABC</i> Public Class	8 weeks 7:30 – 9:30	October 5 Wednesdays	City Island Yacht Club 63 Pilot St Bronx, NY 10464	Jim Duffy 718 863-3855 franz_alvarez@hotmail.com
<i>Basic Boating Class ABC</i> Public Class	8 weeks 7:30 – 9:30	October 6 Tuesdays	Rochambeau School 228 Fischer Avenue White Plains, NY	John Steger 914 472-5520 jwsteger@hotmail.com
<i>Piloting</i> USPS prerequisite class	8 weeks 7:30 – 9:30	October 6 Tuesdays	Preston High School 2780 Schurz Ave Bronx, NY 10465-3298	Gary Bienienwicz 718 828-7115 franz_alvarez@hotmail.com
<i>Sailing 101</i> USPS prerequisite class	8 weeks 7:30 – 9:30	October 6 Tuesdays	City Island Yacht Club 63 Pilot St Bronx, NY 10464	Franz Alvarez 718 715-1161 franz_alvarez@hotmail.com
<i>Basic Boating Class ABC</i> Public Class	Single day class 8:30 – 6:30	November 7 Saturday	New Rochelle Marina 22 Pelham Road New Rochelle, NY	John Steger 914 472-5520 jwsteger@hotmail.com
<i>Chart Reading Seminar</i> Public Class	Single day seminar 7:30 – 9:30	December 10 Thursday	Rochambeau School 228 Fischer Avenue White Plains, NY	John Steger 914 472-5520 jwsteger@hotmail.com

Boating courses are NASBLA approved and can be used for Jet Ski certification.



Execution Rocks Lighthouse, Western Long Island Sound

Cross Currents

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Address Correction
Requested

Replica of Henry Hudson's *Half Moon*, sailing up the Hudson River.

