

the Tar Talks

A Publication of the Norwalk Sail & Power Squadron

Guest Editorial - The Challenge is Now

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More and more USPS national committees are realizing that member's opinions do count. These leaders also realize that if they do not meet member's expectations or insist on implementing ideas that the general membership don't agree with, the membership simply vote by not doing whatever was asked, or worse yet, vote with their feet and walk away.

So with this in mind, the National Membership Committee developed a survey and presentation to be given at all District Conferences this Spring. The first part of the survey was overwhelmingly accepted and is being called "Become a member". This program will allow people to sign up for membership without going through a squadron first. The new member would be given a list of squadrons in their area along with the contact information and websites. At the same time the squadrons will be given the same information to pursue the new member. Why is national doing this?

The critical time for turning around the downward trend in membership is now. A lot of members have expressed the thought that national or districts are not needed. But think about what would happen if we had no one to build our new courses, create marketing for our materials, provide membership services and allow the connections and flow of ideas between districts and squadrons.

Yes, there are also some things we can complain about with national or district; however, the whole structure is important. If you don't like one aspect of USPS, then work to change that part; don't let the whole system die - help us fix it. Look around. There are lots of national and district representatives ready and willing to use your help.

Currently USPS has an enrollment of 41,000+ members. With less than 15% of our squadrons growing and most of our squadrons unable to stop the flow out the back door, (you know this phenomenon; a squadron gets 10 new members one year while 15 slip out the back door.), USPS membership has been in a slow decline since 2001. However, there is good news. The rate of retention is improving. Is one big factor Headquarters billing with online payment and renewal? With the slowing of our decline, came the realization that more and more of our population is becoming internet savvy and USPS needs to take advantage of this movement. Most of us use the internet to pay bills online, check stocks or bank statement or shop online using a credit card. According to Jupiter Research, internet users in developed countries will be 76 percent of the population by the year 2011. The Internet is fast becoming the way of "doing business."

It's time to consider capturing the contact information of potential members and create an opportunity to recruit them online. On the USPS website homepage,

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Have a Good Summer



In Memoriam

P/C Robert F. (Bob) Bauer, S, passed away in late March at the age of 86. He leaves his wife Eva, and 3 children. Bob was Commander in 1984. He was a senior member with 13 merit marks. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the family.

Safety Corner - USPS to issue MMSIs

Modern marine radios now feature Digital Selective Calling (DSC) for routine operations and for automated distress hailing. These features can only be used if your radio is programmed with a unique code called a Maritime Mobile Service Identity, or MMSI. The USPS is authorized by the FCC and the USCG to issue MMSIs to US flagged vessels not subject to Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention requirements. This includes almost all recreational boats. Go to www.usps.org/php/mmsi/home.php for more information.

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the "How to become a member?" button receives 200+ hits every week that go unanswered for lack of a plan and the ability to distribute the information to the squadrons. Even if only half of the 200+ "hits" are from prospective new members that leaves more than 5,200 potential new members whose queries go un-answered in a year!

For the "Become a member" to be a reality several things need to happen. National is working on the program from the top but squadrons need to do as follows in order to opt into this plan. Below are the prerequisite for a national membership campaign that will allow your squadron to be part of accepting membership from large venues and from the internet.

1. assure that your squadron can accept members from the national venues.
2. assure that all data on your squadron website is accurate and easy to find.
3. assure that data changes get to national in a timely manner and are accurate
4. create a plan to enable all members to pursue classes and activities that meet their needs.

The challenge is here and the Challenge is Now. It is up to the squadrons to decide whether they want to pick up the challenge or continue to decline as the world changes.

Ship 6 Update

Ship 6 and Celebration have just returned from a weekend trip to the Sea Scout Gam held at Captain's Cove Seaport in Bridgeport June 7 & 8. After the dense morning fog lifted we sailed up to Bridgeport and arrived as the afternoon activities were getting underway. There were many fun and skills-building activities and crewmembers had an opportunity to meet other sea scouters and were exposed to sailing on other boats. Crews slept on the boats Saturday night and although it was blistering hot for early June, lots of fun was had by all. The Gam is a yearly event where Sea Scout ships from up and down the Connecticut coast gather to enjoy a weekend together. We are already looking forward to the 2009 Gam.

Fundraising update: Norwalk Cove Marina continues to join the many supporters of Ship 6 and has offered us the Cove Marina mini-golf course for a fundraiser evening. Keep your eyes open for an announcement of the Ship 6 mini-golf event being planned for just after the boat show in late September.

Kai Horan, Skipper

Norwalk Sail & Power Squadron 2007 Bridge

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The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Norwalk Sail & Power Squadron or USPS. All members are invited and encouraged to submit items for publication. Email Jim Hamren, hamren@optonline.net

New - Coordinated Member Course Calendar

If you came to the squadron meeting on June 12th or read your email the week following you will already be aware of this breakthrough. Five squadrons in Fairfield County have coordinated to put together a schedule whereby ALL member courses will be offered over the next 12 months (details below). It marks a significant turning point in our local education program. No longer will anyone have to deal with the frustration of wanting to take a course only to find it will not be offered for another three years. Please show your support and take advantage of the new program by signing up for one of these courses. Thank Laura Shaw, our Education Officer for her contribution in getting this done.

Commander Fred

USPS Courses Offered Fall 2008 and Spring 2009

Advanced Grades

Course Name	Offered by	Start Date	Location	Contact
Seamanship	Stamford	Wed, Sep 17	Marine Center	gwlk@aol.com, dsps@optonline.net
Piloting	Captain Harbor	Mon, Sep 22	Greenwich High School	ralphkravitz@sbcglobal.net
Advanced Piloting	Darien	Mon, Jan 12	Middlesex Middle Sch	dsps@optonline.net
Junior Navigation	To be determined by class interest. If interested, contact: dsps@optonline.net			
Navigation	Stamford	Wed, Oct 15	Marine Center	gwlk@aol.com

Electives

Course Name	Offered by	Start Date	Location	Contact
Cruise Planning	Darien	Tues Sep 16	Middlesex Middle Sch	dsps@optonline.net
Engine Maintenance	Captain Harbor	Thurs Feb 5	Greenwich High School	ralphkravitz@sbcglobal.net
Marine Electronics	Stamford	Wed Sep 17	Government Center	gwlk@aol.com
Sail	Darien	Tue Jan 13	Middlesex Middle Sch	dsps@optonline.net
	Captain Harbor	Wed Oct 1	Greenwich High School	ralphkravitz@sbcglobal.net
Weather	Norwalk	Wed Jan 14	Norwalk City Hall	boatnsps@optonline.net

Don't hesitate to direct questions to the contacts listed.

Kick off for Safe Boating Week. May 16th

Norwalk Sail and Power Squadron, Rowayton Power Squadron and Flotilla 72 of the Coast Guard Auxiliary (CGA) continued a longstanding tradition of kicking off National Safe Boating Week with a formal ceremony hosted by the Mayor of Norwalk at City Hall.



In the photo, left to right: Russ Patrick, Commander, Rowayton Power Squadron; Fred Zinsser, Commander, Norwalk Sail and Power Squadron; the Honorable Richard Moccia, Mayor of Norwalk; Ken Kikta, Flotilla 72, CGA (and NSPS), Jason Farrow, Flotilla 72, CGA (and NSPS); and Tony Mobilia, Chairman, Norwalk Harbor Commission (and NSPS). Photo by Barbara Zinsser

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