

# the Tar Talks



A Publication of the Norwalk Sail & Power Squadron

## Commander's Message - Cdr. Fred Zinsser, AP

As someone who has spent 50 years actively on the water, I had developed the opinion that accidents only happen to the unwary or ill-prepared. That is until the day I found myself treading water in the Sound while watching my 30 ft sloop sail off with the main set and the auto pilot engaged, steering a straight course away from me. But that's a story for another day. This time I'd like to talk about Digital Selective Calling (DSC) radios. It is infrequent that I monitor my VHF while underway. The radio is in the cabin and I'm at the helm so it is unlikely that I would hear a call. On the few occasions when I did monitor radio traffic, it was surprising the number of distress calls that went out.



Once I was anchored in Eaton's Neck and heard a call come over the radio from a hysterical woman whose husband had fallen overboard. She was on the vessel alone with no idea as to her location or his. The radio operator at Eaton's Neck was patiently trying to walk her through some positioning methods but they did not seem to be working. It was determined that the vessel, a power boat, left Port Jeff two hours earlier but the speed and direction were unknown and she seemed to have no piloting experience. The Coast Guard mounted an Air Sea search. I never found out what the outcome was.

One time last year I was coming into Norwalk Harbor when I picked up a distress call on my hand held radio. A couple were out fishing when the skipper was injured and unable to operate the radio. Here, too, his wife made the distress call but was unable to determine her exact location. Valuable time was wasted walking her through methods for determining her position. It was ultimately determined the vessel was just off Peck's Ledge and the Norwalk Police were able to respond.

These are just two of the incidents that helped me realize the importance of anyone on board being able to communicate your position easily in an emergency. I went out and bought a DSC capable radio for \$235. Installation was quick and easy. After mounting the new radio and hooking up the antenna wire, power, and ground (all covered in our Marine Electronics class thanks to Jeff Scott) it was just a matter of connecting the two NMEA IN wires to the two NEMA OUT wires on the GPS and the Radio's LCD display acknowledged that it was receiving position data from the GPS. The next step was to go on-line to our USPS® national web page and fill out the MMSI form (two pages on-line), hit the submit button and seconds later (no kidding) I received an e mail with my vessel's MMSI number (338070262). The only thing left to do was input my MMSI number into the new radio. Now anyone onboard "Home Alone" can raise the little red "fail safe" cover on the radio, hold the button in for five (5) seconds and the

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## Congratulations

To Bill McClenaghan and John Sutton for achieving 40 and 45 years, respectively, with USPS in 2009.

## Bridge Meetings Are open to Members

Members are reminded that Bridge Meetings are open to all members. NSPS Bridge Meetings are held the first Monday of every month at Norwalk City Hall, from 7:30 - 9 pm.

## Safety Corner

### 2009 Vessel Safety Check Report

The examiners for NSPS this year were Jack Cohen, Ruth Jansson, and Bette Conner. The trio completed and submitted to National 19 Vessel Safety Checks for Connecticut and Federal requirements.

Most of today's boaters (at least those that ask for a VSC) are knowledgeable about the safety items that should be kept aboard. But during our VSCs we found a few captains who couldn't quickly locate certain equipment or get to those items without digging in a locker under a pile of miscellaneous gear. Emergencies happen suddenly and require quick responses. It is vital that all safety articles are easily and readily available.

### Navigation Rules

The Navigation Rules establish actions to be taken by vessels to avoid collision. Knowing what to do when meeting, crossing, or overtaking another boat and how to communicate your intentions in these situations can prevent costly damage to your boat, personal injury, or even loss of life.

Federal rules require the operator of a vessel 39.4 feet or more to carry on board the most recent copy of the U.S. Dept. of Transportation and U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Rules booklet. Although not required by law to carry this booklet, operators of vessels less than 39.4 feet should be familiar with these Navigation Rules. Knowing the rules of the road is important for all boaters, regardless of their boat's size.

*Bette Conner, AP, Safety Officer & VSC Chair*

Now is the time to start thinking of islands in the tropics:



### Commander's Message contd..

radio will transmit a distress call to everyone within 20 miles, and the Coast Guard will instantaneously know my exact position, that the vessel is a 30 ft sloop, my home address, and emergency contacts.

One additional feature with your DSC radio is that you can make private boat to boat calls at the touch of a button. Say Mike Brown is out on Red Dog and he wants to call me. All he has to do is hit the menu feature on his radio for DSC calling, input my MMSI number or the 1- 9 quick dial code he has assigned to Home Alone, and my radio will ring to let me know Mike is calling. No one else will hear the call and no one else will hear the conversation.

If you would like to learn more about DSC radios, call or write any Officer listed in your member directory. We have a great little 2 hour class on DSC radios and their operation.

Hope to see you at the After Holiday Party.

*Commander Fred*

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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 at optonline dot net

## After-Holiday Party

Please join us for an after-holiday celebration at the Ischoda Yacht Club at 138 Water Street in South Norwalk.

**When:** Sunday January 17th, 2010, from 11am -2 pm

**What:** Brunch buffet including 1 Mimosa or Bloody Mary; additional drinks available at a cash bar. \$20 per person



Annual merit marks to be awarded.

Please RSVP by January 1 to Admin Officer, Kai Horan, kai at oceanvue dot com

## Education Dept. Update

An Instructor Certification/ Re-Certification Course was completed Oct 20 at SHYC. District SEO Joe Lynch presented a seminar on teaching tips for boating courses. The following folk were recertified: Ruth Janssen, Bette Connor, Jim Hamren, Jeff Scott, Laura Shaw, and John Sutton. Mike Brown received his initial (formal) certification.

Thanks to John Frank for instructing 7 members on the art and science of Engine Maintenance this fall. Classes were held Monday nights at Norwalk City Hall. Exam results are still pending.

As you can see in the accompanying table, we are planning to offer the Sail Course beginning in January; the first class to be held on Saturday Jan 16 from 10AM to 2 PM. Further details are to follow. The course will be taught by SEO Mike Brown, SN. We are considering opening the class to interested non-members. If you know someone who might be interested, please contact Mike by phone at 203 554 5199 (cell) or 203 846 1021 (home) or email reddog\_captain at yahoo dot com,

## USPS Courses Offered Winter/Spring 2010

### Advanced Grades

Course Name	Offered by	Start Date	Location	Contact
Seamanship	Captain Harbor Darien	January 2010 March 2010	Greenwich High School Middlesex Middle Sch.	ralphkravitz@sbcglobal.net leah_beckman@mac.com
Piloting	Stamford	January 2010	Stamford Govt. Ctr.	gwlk@aol.com
Advanced Piloting	Darien Captain Harbor	January 2010 Spring 2010	Middlesex Middle Sch. Greenwich High School	leah_beckman@mac.com ralphkravitz@sbcglobal.net
JN and Navigation	To be determined by class interest.			

### Electives

Course Name	Offered by	Start Date	Location	Contact
Engine Maintenance	Captain Harbor	January 2010	Greenwich High School	ralphkravitz@sbcglobal.net
Sail	Captain Harbor Norwalk	Spring 2010 January 2010	Greenwich High School TBD	ralphkravitz@sbcglobal.net reddog_captain@yahoo.com
Weather	Darien	January 2010	Middlesex Middle Sch.	leah_beckman@mac.com

## Ship 6 Update

In early October NSPS and Ship 6 hosted the first Annual Mini-golf fundraiser benefiting Ship 6. Norwalk Cove Marina provided the location. The first year event was modest with NSPS members and Ship 6 crew family and friends attending. The weather turned nice for the rain date and everyone had fun. The event consisted of open mini-golf play, food, entertainment, raffle and a silent auction. Thanks to all who supported the event and attended on the big day.

Another great season including over 30 sailing days has come to an end and the boat is now fully winterized. Ship 6's winter program is in full swing including frostbiting, by invitation, at Stamford Yacht Club for particularly interested and dedicated scouts. Among other great learning opportunities, Ship 6 plans to take the USPS Sail course this winter.

If you know of any Juniors who might be interested in Ship 6 please contact Ship 6's Skipper, Kai Horan, Kai at oceanvue dot com

## GPS Seminar Seats Available

There are still seats available for the GPS/Fishfinder Seminar co-sponsored by NSPS and the Norwalk Boat Club (NBC) . The event will be held Wednesday, Dec. 9, at the NBC, from 7 to 10 pm. The NBC is located at 9-11 Wall Street, Norwalk (between the Fat Cats restaurants).

Light dinner, student materials, and instruction are \$35; without student materials \$20. There will be a Cash bar. If interested contact Mike Brown by phone at 203 554 5199 (cell) or 203 846 1021 (home).



c/o Jim Hamren  
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Address Correction Requested

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