



THE PUBLICATION OF THE CHAIN-O-LAKES SAIL AND POWER SQUADRON

The Link

A UNIT OF THE UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS® DISTRICT 20

December 2011

Volume 11

Issue 5

Commander's Corner

As the year comes to an end, it sure was busy. As commander all you do is hope our squadron's members will pitch in and help with the planning and execution of all the programs we are involved with.

This year has gone well beyond my expectations. The support and the amount of work to not only host the fall conference but to represent our squadron and provide the district with a first class conference. I have received only positive comments about our preparation and execution.

This winter and spring will be packed with many exciting events. The Christmas party was a great success; the food was good and the gift exchange was lively. Be sure to attend the annual meeting in January and the Change of Watch in February.

I would like invite all members to be more involved in planning next year's activities. An email will follow when and where the planning meeting will take place.

I would like to thank the bridge and all members that have planned and helped with our activities.

Have a good holiday season.

Chip Byrne
Commander

Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Events

THE LINK
 December 2011, Volume Eleven,
 Number Five
 Published by The Chain-O-Lakes
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 of the United States Power
 Squadrons® District 20
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Visit <http://chain-o-lakes.org/>
 for all events for this year

January

- 7 **COL Bridge Meeting - 1930 hrs**
Ron/Nancy Herbig, Grayslake
- 6 **Bridge Meeting D/20**
Holiday Inn, Elgin
- 7 **Annual Meeting/Founder's Day**
TBD - Shirley Wojcick
- 11/15 **Chicago Boat/RV Show**
McCormick Place, Chicago
- 25-29 **USPS Annual Meeting**
Jacksonville, FL
- 26-29 **Strictly Sail Show**
Navy Pier, Chicago

Plan to attend one of our many educational or social events.

February

- 1 **COL Bridge Meeting - 1930 hrs**
Chip/Nancy Byrne, Lake in the Hills
- 2 **Bridge Meeting D/20**
Holiday Inn, Elgin
- 18 **Operations Training**
TBD
- 2 **Change of Watch**
TBD

From the Chain-O-Lakes Sail & Power Squadron Educational Department

Knowledge helps us make good choices, keep learning!

Before I begin my report I want to say I am honored and humbled as the recipient of the District 20 Award for Excellence in Teaching. I am not sure I deserve to be in the ranks of previous District awardees but I thank everyone who had the confidence in my teaching abilities to nominate me for such a prestigious honor. Thank You All!

Now that our boats are wrapped up for the winter it is time to think about the holidays and the new boating season. The boat shows will be upon us soon and new boat buyers will be looking for someone to help them enjoy their new investment. We have two locations scheduled to provide more boating knowledge to new boaters. The **Crystal Lake Park District** begins on 21 February for our 7 week **ABC** course and continuing to 3 April with the optional charting sessions. **The Fox Waterway Agency ABC** begins on 14 March to 25 April with the charting sessions. The FWA website will be updated in January to draw in new boaters looking for the convenient location on the Chain for a beginning boating class as they have for the past few years.

To help teach the ABC classes we have a cadre of instructors being trained at our *Instructor Development* course in its second week. We should have 4 new instructors ready to help teach the ABC class for the coming season. In addition to the material supplied by **USPS** I want our instructors to have the knowledge to be more professional and polished presenters. Knowing the material is only part of being a good presenter. Understanding the audience and connecting with them is the key to transferring our boating knowledgeable and experience to the public in hopes of converting class participants into long lasting members.

Once the **ID** course nears its end we have a **Seamanship** course ready to go. If we have a

minimum number of participants for **S**, we can get them into **Piloting** and possibly **Advanced Piloting** before the new boating season begins.

Boating education is key to the USPS mission. Whether it is public classes, member elective classes or advanced grades, my goal is to provide the education our members are looking for to make each of you feel more confident on the waters on which we boat. If you have a need for an advanced grade like Seamanship, Piloting or Advanced Piloting contact me so we can arrange the schedule. The many elective courses are, Marine Electronics, Engine Maintenance, Weather etc can be scheduled if we have enough interested members to join in. Let me know your interests so we can get something going.

We will be offering **USPS University** seminars; **Boat Handling, Trailing, and Anchoring** during **Safe Boating Week** again this coming year. When the schedule is distributed let me know if you would like to participate as a presenter or participant, the more the merrier.

Learning gives us power and choices; become a life-long learner!

Lt/C Ron Herbig, AP
Squadron Educational Officer

Congrats to COL Power Squadron!



The Chain-O-Lakes Sail and Power Squadron won two major awards at our **2011 Fall District Conference**.

The Charles F. Chapman Award for Excellence in

Teaching recognizes outstanding USPS instructors. Once a year, each squadron nominates one outstanding instructor to its district. Members of our squadron put together a Chapman Award nomination packet and submitted our nomination to District 20 Educational Officer.

This nomination packet asked the squadron members to address certain questions about the nominee's background, subject knowledge, teaching skills and style and their ability to relate the course material to the experience of the students.

Squadron members are then invited to write personal letters of recommendation, focusing primarily on what makes this person such an outstanding instructor.

The District Educational Officer forms a committee to select one nominee within their district for national judging.

Lt. Commander Ron Herbig, AP was chosen by District 20 and will be submitted to the National Educational Officer for final judging.

The following are a few comments from the students who attended Ron Herbig's classes:

- "He has a genuine desire to impart knowledge to those he is teaching."
- "He makes the learning fun in a very relaxed atmosphere."
- "His enthusiasm for boating shows through in his

teaching style."

- "Each time I sit in his class I learn something new."
- "His congenial style allows a free exchange of information and encourages participation from his class."
- "He makes effective use of teaching aids, smoothly integrating the aids into his presentation."
- "Whenever a particularly difficult subject arose, he always seemed to have alternative ways to get his point across."
- "He adjusts the schedule and pace of the class to match the scope of student ability."
- "He has a special way of relating the course material to real life situations so that you remember the lesson long after the test is given."
- "He kindled our desire to learn."

These are the attributes of an outstanding teacher and a Chapman Award Winner.

Past Winners of the Chapman Award

Lt/C. Albert J. Dobbeck, AP 1993 National Award
P/C Dave Delahunty, SN 1997 District 20 Award



The Chain-O-Lakes other award was for **Best In Show for Teaching Aids**.

A group of members gathered together after one of our seminar classes and wanted a hands-on teaching aid for showing students the proper procedure for docking and tying their boat to a pier.

After a few basic ideas **Skip Ambrose** took this concept and constructed a four position table top boat dock along with boats teaching aid. Skip's

attention to detail and craftsmanship on this teaching aid was more than anyone could have expected. He include moveable outboard motors to show the proper propulsion direction, flag post to simulate the effect of wind and current, and posts to demonstrate the proper way to tie spring, aft and bow lines. This teaching aid will be a great asset in providing a hands-on approach to teaching ABC-3 students.

Skips teaching aid will be taken to the National Governing Board Conference, Jacksonville, Florida in January by the District 20 DEO for national judging. Hopefully Skip Ambrose and Chain-O-Lakes will come home with a National award.

The Chain-O-Lakes Sail and Power Squadron is very proud to have Ron Herbig and Skip Ambrose as members of our squadron. They are an inspiration to us all and with a little effort from everyone we can achieve outstanding results.

P/C Jim Geske, AP

The Final Basket Update ...

You've already read about our success in hosting the D-20 Fall Conference in articles from Commander Chip and Conference Chairman Cindy, but I wanted to take it one step further to elaborate on the success of our basket raffle, and to thank all those who generously volunteered a basket. We heard nothing but glowing comments from conference attendees along the lines of "these are the best raffle prizes we've ever seen at a conference" and this was attested to by our raffle ticket sales, which far exceeded any of our expectations. I could not be happier with the way the basket raffle turned out, and I would like to express a very big thank you to those who stepped up to the plate and hit a grand slam: Kim Ambrose, Skip Ambrose, Bill and Sue Bellinger, Pat Braker, Nancy Byrne, Justina Deary, Jamie Fry (Vince Romanelli), Ross Gemmill, Cindy Geske, Ron Herbig, Dick and Jill Kaman, and Donna Nilsson. We would also like to thank the three members of the Racine squadron who kindly donated two baskets for our raffle: Linda Erdmann and Jim and Connie Runge.

If it's true that imitation is the best form of flattery, then I expect we will see gift baskets at future conferences as other squadrons try to duplicate our success, and in fact, we've already had a request from the host squadrons of the D-20 Spring Conference, Racine and Evanston, to donate a basket to their raffle. Since that is still several months off, we can discuss a theme and contents at a later time; for now, we'll just bask in the glory of our own success!

Lt. Nancy Herbig,
Chairman, Basket Raffle

Member's Photo Album

By Justina Deary and Tim Levo



Pull out your boating photo albums! We are starting a new section of the newsletter where you are able to send in your pictures and one photo will be displayed per newsletter (don't worry we will find a way to display all the pictures for your viewing pleasure).

Each month there will be a theme to go along with, next month's theme will be: **Towables** (tuber, skiers, wake-board, etc... anything you tow behind a boat) Make it artistic, funny, abstract, or however you wish. Just make sure you send in your pictures to **Tim.Levo@gmail.com** by **December 31st!**

Here is last month's picture from **Kim Ambrose**. The theme was pets and boats. This is their dog Madison on their old boat.

Next month's theme...

Towables

Chain-O-Lakes Sail and Power Squadron is expanding their presence on Facebook



Are you on Facebook? Like the squadron's page by searching for us under "Chain-O-Lakes Sail & Power Squadron" or simply by clicking the link on any of the pages at <http://col.uspsd20.org>.

A common dilemma facing all organizations is membership. In order for any group to grow, it must search out new members. The ideas on how to bring new members in are many and all avenues should be implemented. Not only do new members contribute financially to the club through dues, but also just as importantly through ideas, volunteering and attending functions.

One way is through Facebook. It is the

social media for everyone. There are no age limits and everyone from pre-teen to grandparents use it for communicating with family and friends.

The squadron has a page on Facebook, but it is now being actively used and marketed to businesses and boaters on the Chain-O-Lakes. It takes time to build up our presence on Facebook, but by local businesses and people who are on the chain seeing our page, it is my hope that we will be reach them to tell them about our educational classes, activities and have new members.

If you are not on Facebook, what are you waiting for? Many of our functions pictures are posted here and it is a great site to also receive information and reminders of upcoming events. If you are already connected with the page, make sure to post any topics and when you see a post come up, share with your friends simply by hitting the "share" button.

Kim Ambrose

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USPS and the IRS

DEDUCTIBLE EXPENSES

Being a USPS member has many benefits, not only in self-education, but also in enhancing leadership and organizational skills. Membership offers opportunities to bond with like-minded people; life-long friendships are formed. Our volunteer work creates pride in self while providing our communities with needed education in boating safety. One may also be able to take advantage of several income tax deductions.

The United States Power Squadrons has a 501 (C) 3 tax status. This translates into a not-for-profit organization based upon our educating the public. Squadrons must file the 990 Tax Form every year to maintain this tax status and teach the public boating class.

So what does it mean to you? A little or a lot! It depends on whether you itemize your deductions on your tax return. If you do itemize you can take advantage of these tax deductions. Here are some examples of areas you can claim as deductions.

- A large portion of your dues: The cost of materials you receive as a member like The Ensign or squadron newsletter should not be a part of the deduction.
- All uniforms and insignia: As long as they are meant to be worn exclusively while active in the USPS service (boat show, public class, etc.). For example, let's take the Blazer...If a USPS patch is sewn on, it would qualify; but if one used the pocket patch (which can be removed) it may be questionable.

• Attending Meetings

If you have functional purpose for attending a meeting, you should have deductions.

We can not deduct our time, but we can deduct mileage and tolls to activities where we have a function or obligation to perform in service of the organization, such as: giving a report, collecting money, participating as a committee member, voting in an election, teaching, proctoring, performing VSEs, etc.

National Meetings: Squadrons appoint members as delegates to the GB meetings. Other members are on a national committee; some of these members get completely reimbursed for travel to and from the meetings and a stipend for a hotel room. They can all deduct a reasonable cost for meals. Those that are not reimbursed can deduct the entire cost of those expenses.

District Meetings: Squadrons appoint delegates as voting members of the Conference. Those serving on the Council or on a district committee also have a function and /or an obligation to fulfill by attending. Their expenses for rooms and meals are deductible as long as they are reasonable. If one were to reserve a penthouse suite for the weekend and order filet and lobster along with Dom Perignon, the IRS would assuredly frown on this as a deduction.

Squadron Meetings: Most squadron meetings are held locally, mileage and tolls are deductible, but meals are not deductible since you are not gone overnight.

- Materials and supplies used in performing service for the organization: Postal expenses, office supplies, ink, copying costs, etc. Many items may be in the squadron's budget and totally reimbursable.
 - Use of the telephone and Internet for USPS communication: Some percentage should be deductible.
 - Subscriptions to periodicals: These may be a necessary part of keeping current in your area of USPS expertise.
 - Anything you donate to the squadron: Whether cash or tangible items (like donations for the conference raffles).
 - If your boat is used for USPS purposes, those expenses may be deductible.
- You can check the Operations Manual for other details. You should also check with your tax accountant/lawyer or whoever else may assist you in tax matters.
- P/R/C William M Bellinger, SN

Chain Gang Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting/Founders Day

January 7th, 2012 at 6:30, dinner at 7:00

Moretti's

164 S Route 12, Fox Lake, IL.

We are having a buffet with Salmon, Pork, Beef and all the appropriate side dishes. **\$27.00 each.**

Change of Watch

February 25th, 2012

Turnberry Country Club

9600 Turnberry Trail, Lakewood, IL. 60014

Times and more details to follow but **reserve the date** for the installation of our new Bridge and formal dinner.

With questions or for reservations please respond to Don **Kerr** at kerrdek@att.net or 815-236-6135

November and December Birthdays

Donald E. Kerr	12 November
Francis R. Ward	17 November
Judith L. Kerr	22 November
James B. Bowgren	28 November
Paul Wagner	06 December
Ross E. Gemmill	08 December

From the

MENTORS CORNER

It's no secret that we are all looking for opportunities to save on expenses these days. But did you know that as a USPS member some of those opportunities are only a few clicks away!!!

Just think, 12% off on that new computer system or 1/3 off the annual subscription to a popular boating magazine. What about cruise tickets with the only 110% Best Price Guarantee in the industry? With spring right around the corner how would you like to save up to 50% off on some new home furnishings or maybe some lawn and garden products. Or perhaps you would just like to have saved 55% off that latest prescription drug.

Whatever your needs, USPS has partnered with over 30 national companies to make numerous benefits available to our members. So if you have not taken a look at the USPS Member Benefit page lately, click on this link:

http://www.usps.org/national/admin_dept/benefitsdescription.htm#Cruisesonly

Remember, those SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES are only a few CLICKS AWAY!!!

P/C Pat Braker, JN
Mentoring Chairman

SAVE
with USPS membership benefits

February 2012 Cruise

Join your friends from **Skokie Valley Power Squadron** aboard the Ruby Princess and cruise the Caribbean. Come join us for 7 days aboard the Ruby Princess Sailing to the Bahamas, St Maarten, St. Thomas, and Grand Turk.

What: Princess Cruises Cruise Line

When: Sunday February 26th - Sunday March 4th 2012

Ports: Ft. Lauderdale, Princess Cays, Bahamas, St. Maarten, St. Thomas, Grand Turk, Ft. Lauderdale

Base Cabin Rates: Inside cabin \$649, Obstructed Ocean View \$699, Balcony \$949, Mini-Suite Balcony \$1449 Prices are subject to change.

Reservations need to be made As Soon As Possible, while cabins are available

To book your cabin, contact Princess Cruises at 800-901-1172 X31116 and ask for Sue. Our Group Name is **Skokie Valley**. Sue's email address is: supdegraft@princess.com

Form questions or more information contact Skokie Valley organizer **Ron Zingler** at **847-634-3806**. Ron's email address is: zingleron@comcast.net

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