Bay Mesh
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America's Boating Club Houston
'Where the Cowboys Ride the Sea'

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Life Outside the Box

By P/C Chris Leavitt, SN-CN

As a general statement, our Squadron calendar is a lot like a cruise ship – its monthly schedule is a lot like the previous month's schedule. The first Wednesday is our Executive Board Meeting, the first Saturday is our public boating class, the second Wednesday is our members' dinner meeting, the second weekend is powerboat on-the-water training, the third weekend is Level 1 Kayaking training, and overlaid across these events are other activities of interest to one special group or another. One month is very like another month – until it's not.

In July of this year, Caprice Stephens, a Teacher at the Woodlands College Park High School, Conroe, TX, reached out to us and inquired about a class in Boater Safety. Ms. Stephens is an Outdoor educator, and part of her curriculum is the Boater's Ed Certification. Could we teach our public class to her students, allowing them to earn a Texas Boater Ed Certification? Teaching 111 high school students Boater's Ed was not on our bingo card for 2023, or any other year for that matter. Would the course fit into a High School schedule? Could our instructors deal with that concentration of young people? Did we even want to try? We nonchalantly said "sure" and started planning.

First, all of the retired Instructors were asked if they wanted to teach, and to a man or woman, they volunteered:

Monica Cross
Roger Runnels
Lynn McKee
Cathy Leavitt
Alan Cross
Adam Salazar
Scott McDonald
Chris Leavitt

Adam Salazar is currently not retired, but literally working at a college across the street from the High School, and he volunteered too. The course was reviewed and split into manageable 45-minute chunks and a plan developed. Other issues reared their ugly heads. How would we register the youth for the class, and how would we handle the TPWD fee, and how many would we need to provide scholarships for? Over the course of a week, things fell into place, and we were ready to teach. At least we thought we were.

(Continued on Page 5)

Poop Sheet October 2023

October 4
Board of Directors Meeting – Teleconference

October 7
D/21 Fall Conference – Teleconference

October 14-15
Leave No Trace Course – Home Port

October 14
Nurture Nature Festival – Baytown Nature Center

October 21
Kayaking Level 1 – Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve

October 22
Kayak Rendezvous – McDade Park
Leave No Trace Workshop – Home Port

October 25 *(not second Wednesday)*
General Meeting – Potluck at Home Port

October 28
Sea Scouts Kayaking Day – Lake Woodlands

October 29
First Aid for Mariners – Home Port
Kayak Rendezvous – Lake Charlotte

November 1
Board of Directors Meeting – Teleconference

November 4
Boater Safety Course – Home Port
Kayak Rendezvous – Paul Hopkins Park

November 8
General Meeting – TBD

November 11
Geodetic Marker Recovery Day - Seabrook

November 12
Boater Safety Course – Capt. Roy's

Watch your email for event announcements!

AMERICA'S BOATING CLUB
For Boaters, By Boaters™

Bay Neigh

Official Monthly Publication of
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District 21

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Assistant Editor

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Bridge

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Educational Officer..... Lt/C Alan W. Cross, AP
Administrative Officer.....Lt/C Frank Amsler, P
Secretary.....Lt/C Scott McDonald, SN
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Asst. Administrative Officer..... P/C Chris Leavitt, SN-CN
Asst. Secretary.....P/R/C Claire McDonald, SN
Asst. Treasurer..... 1st/Lt Deborah Collings

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Warren Fields, P
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Lynn McKee, P
Richard Robson, AP
Adam Salazar
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PRAYER

Oh, Eternal God, the Father of us all, who has at all times accepted and blessed the services of men, look mercifully, we beseech Thee, upon all who labor diligently for the building of a better Squadron.

Protect us in the way wherein we go, and grant that in singleness of purpose and with a willing mind we may worthily accomplish the task committed to us, to the glory and praise of Thy name.

Amen

COMMANDER'S CORNER

October 2023 Bay Neigh
Cdr Amy L. Taylor, S

Leave No Trace On-and-Near Shore Principles and Open Water Principles

Twenty-five years ago, environmental advocates from the public, the outdoor industry, and the land management community responded to a call to protect our natural lands and the *Leave No Trace* organization was born. The organization accomplishes its mission by providing innovative education, skills, research, and science to help people care for the outdoors. By working with the public and those managing public lands, *Leave No Trace* focuses on educating people – instead of costly restoration programs or access restrictions – as the most effective and least resource-intensive solution to land protection.

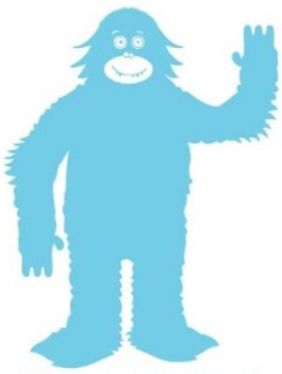
These brand-new principles were created in an effort to educate recreational boaters on how they can protect our precious water sources and the wildlife/marine life that depend on them. Leave No Trace, Inc. developed these principles with Federal Agency partners like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

This is important work for NOAA, as the Marine Sanctuaries they protect see a lot of tourism and visitor impact. There are sensitive habitats along our shorelines like sea turtle nesting season in Florida, important coral reef habitats like those off the coast of Texas and Louisiana, and fragile ecosystems along the coast of California. We all need to work to protect these areas by recreating responsibly.

The 7 Principles of Leave No Trace provide an easily understood framework of minimum impact practices for anyone visiting the outdoors. The Principles can be applied anywhere – from remote wilderness areas, to local parks and even in your backyard. Each Principle covers a specific topic and provides detailed information to empower you to minimize your impacts. The 7 Principles are well-established and widely known but not static. Leave No Trace continually examines, evaluates, and reshapes the Principles and conducts research to ensure that they are up to date with the latest insights from biologists, land managers, and other leaders in outdoor education.

The Houston Squadron is the only Squadron in the USA that is a Community Partner with LNT, Inc. There is more! The Houston Squadron has members who are LNT Master Educators, including yours truly and **P/C Susie Becvar, AP**. We offer FREE classes on leave no trace and their quintessential 7 Principles.

Remember to leave no trace – Bigfoot has been doing it for years.



Focus on Boating Education

Lt/C Alan W. Cross, AP
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uspsseohouston@gmail.com

Together, we make boating better

"Change is Inevitable. Growth is Optional – and Success is Awesome!"

The last *Bay Neigh* article from your Squadron Education Officer was all about the inevitable changes that have come, and how our great Squadron would adapt. Little did I realize just what a great Squadron we have!

Let's begin (again) with the infamous quote by John Maxwell,

> *"Change is inevitable, whether we want the change, we expect the change, or if we prepare for or love the change. We get older, wiser, more educated, and certainly more experienced. When change arrives, in any form, we can be prepared for addressing that change, or we can scramble at the last moment and try to adapt to the change; or be crushed by it."*

The US Power Squadron is *For Boaters, By Boaters*, and we've been making boating safer and more enjoyable for over 114 years. Our mission is teaching boating skills, engaging in fun boating activities, and connecting with the boating community. The Houston Squadron, however, is an overachiever Squadron! Not only do we connect with the boating community, but we are well connected with maritime communities that protect our waterways through awareness programs and conservation. We have strong connections with other national organizations that have deep roots in the maritime and recreational boating communities. Our Squadron-delivered education is way beyond what many Squadrons can, or hope to, offer.

Enough of the Platitudes! Let's Talk!!

What brings many folks to the Squadron? *Education*. Some want the basics, like boater safety courses and introduction to paddle craft; others want an extensive education in preparation for great adventures. These courses bring potential members to the Squadron, our lifeblood if you will. Even if a student doesn't join, we've reached into the community with our name, our brand, our programs. This is what lets us grow.

Let's Talk About a Few Specific Wins!

Our boater safety course attendance is stable, but did we get a fun opportunity! The Squadron delivered the TPWD boater safety course to 111 students at the *Woodlands College Park High School*, with 51 youth completing the work required to earn their Texas Boater Safety certificate. Certificate or not, all the students took the class, learned the materials, did all the work in their handbook, and are safer on the water because of the education. We are blessed because all of the Squadron's boater safety instructors taught or supported this effort.

The wins keep coming, as we opened up another location for teaching boater safety. **Capt. Robert Campbell**, a Squadron member and Lead Instructor for *Capt. Roy's Maritime Education* in Seabrook (TX), opened up a classroom for a once-a-month boater safety course. Competently staffed by **Lt/C Al Meyer, JN**, we've expanded education into another geographic area of the metroplex. Speaking of "another geographic area", **Capt. Adam Tunks, SN**, in the Dallas area and a Houston Squadron member, is offering an *Inland Navigation* course to a large number of students beginning early 2024!

If you watch late night television, you'll see commercials that offer a product and then declare "*But Wait! There's More!*" – and true to form, we have more wins!

The Squadron has three more Kayak instructors. **Irmi Willcockson** has progressed so much with her own education, skills, and giving back to the Squadron, a very hearty "thank you" is given! Just this last weekend, **Heather Gamber** and **Linda Crowl** passed their American Canoe Association (ACA) Kayaking Level 1 Instructor and Level 1 Tour Leader accreditation. These three additions to the Kayaking program lead to an expansion of offerings through the program (more on that at a later date). Suffice to say – opportunities were found and acted upon, and the Squadron is better for it.

Finally, and certainly not least, every instructor in the Houston Squadron has stepped forward these last 4 years and offered their time and effort in teaching. These last few months, these same instructors have *embraced the change* in schedules and course demands; adding new instruction dates, filling in to help the primary instructor, offering additional classes, and bringing new instructors into the fold.

Change is inevitable. Come grow with us.

Being an instructor with the Houston Squadron is fun. Bring your particular passion for a subject to the group.

Interested? Just want to talk about personal opportunities in education with the Squadron?

Contact. To contact me, best way is uspsseohouston@gmail.com or call me on the cell at 281-451-1146.

The Treasurer's Box
From the Squadron Treasurer
Lt/C Monica K, Cross, AP

"Our Fiscally Responsible Squadron"

Our Squadron's financial stability is a multi-layered work product of many members. These last few years, our membership has stabilized (or is growing!) and we've been beneficiaries of extraordinary gifts. The Austin Squadron distributed monies and assets earmarked specifically for Education, the Ouachita Squadron donated assets to benefit our Education and outreach programs, and we receive generous donations from member Steve Smallwood (with HPE and through Benevity) that support our public outreach, education, and marketing programs (see our new boating simulator!).

Our Squadron remains very solvent because we use common and accepted accounting processes and controls. All this helps us maintain good accounting control over our assets (both financial and physical). Our budget is straightforward, complete, and always reviewed and audited, to ensure only funds that have been budgeted are spent, and anything else is always approved by the proper authorities in the Squadron.

Renewing your membership is important to the Squadron. Your timely membership renewal helps during the yearly budget process. Bringing in a new member is something everyone can, and should, do. There is something else you can do – if another member needs some assistance with membership, talk to them and consider "gifting their membership" for another year. Another way the Squadron brings in funding are through our Education Department, most especially our boater safety courses and our kayaking programs. The advanced and elective courses are good, but the biggest incomes are boater safety and kayaking.

We have a great organization, and our monetary and physical assets are managed well. Be a part of the continued success of the Squadron by:

- Renewing your membership,
- Bringing in a new member, and
- Consider becoming an instructor.

July Dinner Meeting at Mia's Table
Photos by Lt/C Alan W. Cross, AP

Life Outside the Box

(Continued from Page 1)

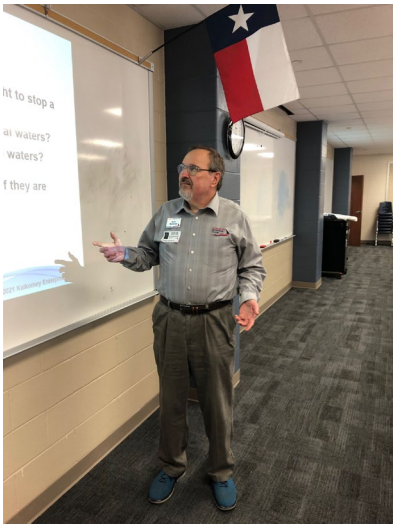
On the first day of our two-week educational adventure, things went pretty well. Two of the instructors were late for the first period class, there were technical issues getting the PowerPoint to load, but the plan was good – we only scheduled about 35 slides for the first day. This is a good time to mention the class is about 330 slides long and contains 9 short videos. The daily average was scheduled for 44 slides per day. Interestingly, each day those 44 slides covered one topic – almost as if the course developers had planned the course for a high school program. In Texas, roughly 6000 youth per year take the Boater Ed class, mostly as part of their Future Farmers of America program – so maybe the developers did organize the class for a 55-minute class period.

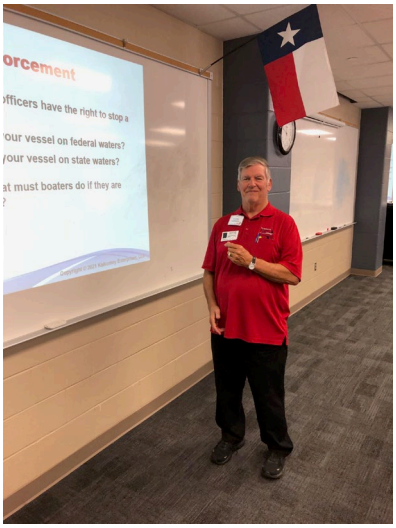
The first week went smoothly until Friday. Ms. Stephens had to drive the Girls Track Team to a meet, so we had a substitute teacher, who forgot to come get us in the security zone. First period always gets slammed. I can't speak for any of the other instructors, but I was grateful for the weekend. And then it was Monday again! We were in a new room, and all the IT issues resurfaced and were corrected. In the end, we finished teaching Wednesday and scheduled the test for Thursday.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Boat Ed group went over and above helping us out. In the class we had several English-as-a-Second-Language students. TPWD rushed us a number of Spanish language books and tests; then they developed a grading sheet for the tests. It's great to work with people who have the same goals and objectives. Once the 111 tests were graded, that's right 111 youth took the boating safety course, and the results submitted to Texas Parks and Wildlife, we could step back and look at everything.

Evaluation is a key part of lessons learned, and we surely learned a lot. Mostly, we learned that we did things right – the actual teaching part worked well for each instructor, the organization of the material worked (sometimes the material exceeded the time frame, usually that was due to external issues). The staffing level was ok. No one got burned out. We need to pay more attention to non-English speakers. We can do Spanish, but Ukrainian and Chinese are going to be an unresolved issue.

Lastly, let us look at the numbers. We had 111 students. 80 passed. 31 failed – there was a lot of interest and some apathy. 51 chose to register and pay for the TPWD Boat Ed Certificate. So, we had a 72% pass rate. So, if our goal is to teach people to be safer on the water, we succeeded.





Bay Neigh Articles

If you have a story or experience that would be of interest to our members, please E-Mail pictures and stories to Jana Wesson at beakboatgirl@me.com

America's Boating Club – Houston
6910 Bellaire Blvd #15
Houston, Texas 77074

October 2023 Birthdays

Alexandra V. Aikin	Oct 1
Coryn Bloom	Oct 1
Amena F. Khan	Oct 3
Larry J. Smith	Oct 3
Julie R. Bleisch	Oct 5
Richard J. Robson	Oct 5
Robert William Stevenson	Oct 5
Arian Chander	Oct 6
Juliet Smallwood	Oct 8
Cheryl D. Nimtz	Oct 10
Douglas D. Osborn	Oct 10
Adam T. Tunks	Oct 10
Grayson D. Youngblood	Oct 10
James H. Wells	Oct 12
Juan C. Perez	Oct 13
Troy Hogan	Oct 15
Marcus Carrig	Oct 16
Champ C. Herndon III	Oct 17
Sujith K. Joseph	Oct 17
Marsha L. Smith	Oct 17
Michael S. Mankins	Oct 20
Edwin John Roland	Oct 20
Deborah L. Collings	Oct 22
Martha P. Osborn	Oct 22
Anna Banach-Aikin	Oct 25
Mikela A. Hellberg	Oct 28
Michael R. Robson	Oct 29
Robert J. Campbell	Oct 30
Christopher Wise	Oct 30

October Dinner Meeting

Dinner Meeting at Home Port

Wednesday, October 25
(NOT Second Wednesday!)

6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Come join us for a potluck dinner, fellowship, and an interesting speaker at our Squadron's monthly meeting at Home Port. Bring your favorite food for a few friends. We'll have all the dinnerware and drinks (iced tea, water, sodas). A simple time to chat and eat and have a nice time with friends.

6:30 PM Social gathering

7:00 PM Dinner

8:00 PM Speaker

9:00 PM Adjournment

Home Port: 6910 Bellaire Blvd. #15, Houston, Texas, 77074, United States

Let me know if you have any questions.
Frank Amsler, famslerusps@gmail.com, 713-806-3772