



Conservation Cooperation
By P/C Chris Leavitt, JN

Four members of the Houston Sail and Power Squadron and four Sea Scouts participated in the removal of Chinese Privet, an invasive exotic plant, from Bud Hadfield park in Cypress. The project supported the conservation efforts of the Bayou Preservation Association (www.bayoupreservation.org). This project was the last requirement for Able Sea Scout and Houston Sail & Power Squadron member **Joseph Rogalski** to earn a Quartermaster Award – the highest rank in Sea Scouts. Joseph is in his 2nd year at Texas A&M Galveston and will be earning his BS and License as a 3rd Mate there.

Joseph was a Boy Scout, earning his Eagle Rank, and became a Sea Scout at age 18, earning the highest rank in Sea Scouting in less than three years. Sea Scouts is a co-ed program for youth age 14 to 21 and works with the United States Power Squadrons to teach the basics of Seamanship, Safety on the Water, and Leadership.



Sea Scouts and HSPS members – removing invasive plants and dodging rain at Bud Hadfield Park.

Poop Sheet April 2017

- April 1
 - ABC3 – Ron Hoover Marine, Katy
 - VSC – Lake Cove Subdivision
- April 5
 - Board of Directors Meeting – Home Port
- April 6-8
 - D/21 Spring Conference – Fort Worth
- April 8
 - ABC3 – Home Port
- April 12
 - HSPS General Meeting – Steak Night at Home Port
- April 22
 - Adopt-A-Beach – Luanne Novak
 - VSC – Freedom Boat Club (Endeavour Marina)
 - Practical On-the-Water Training – Lakewood Yacht Club
- April 29
 - VSC – April Plaza Marina
- May 3
 - Board of Directors Meeting – Home Port
- May 5
 - HSPS General Meeting – Cinco de Mayo Party at Home Port
- May 6
 - ABC3 – Texas Marine Conroe
- May 13
 - Practical On-the-Water Training – Lakewood Yacht Club
- May 20
 - ABC3 – Home Port
 - Ready, Set, Wear It! – Home Port
- May 21
 - Trailer Rodeo – Location TBA
- May 27
 - VSC – Clear Lake Channel Public Boat Ramp (Under Hwy 146 Bridge)

Bay Neigh

Official Monthly Publication of
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Houston Sail and Power Squadron
District 21



Editor
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Assistant Editor

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Bridge

Commander.....Cdr Scott. McDonald, SN-ACN
Executive OfficerLt/C R. Luanne Novak, P
Educational Officer Lt/C Robert W. Stevenson, JN
Administrative Officer Lt/C George H. Crowl, Jr., AP
Secretary Lt/C Kyli Doucette, S
Treasurer..... Lt/C Phyllis Stendebach, P
Immediate Past Cdr..... P/C Chris Leavitt, JN

Squadron's 1st Lieutenants

Asst. Educational Officer.....TBD
Asst. SecretaryTBD
Asst. Treasurer..... 1st/Lt Deborah Collings

Executive Committee

All Bridge Officers...	Cathy Leavitt, P
Kathy Benkenstein	Claire McDonald, SN
William E. Blan, S	Stephanie Shipp
John L. Glaeser, SN	Carl Stendebach, JN
Daniel C. Huston, AP	Jana Wesson, AP

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and publication herein does not imply endorsement by USPS or HSPS.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, in our crusade for greater boating safety, some of our members have introduced the notion of courtesy under power and sail. If we are to extend this consideration for others to all boatmen, how much more gracious should we be toward those who are actually members of United States Power Squadrons. At times there appears to be a friendship gap between members of long-standing and those who have recently joined. Lord, we earnestly ask that You inspire all of us with a warm spirit of fellowship so that we may enthusiastically welcome aboard all of our new members with the result that they may quickly acquire a generous and lasting dedication to our cause. Be with us, Lord, now and ever and ever.

Amen

COMMANDER'S CORNER



April 2017 Bay Neigh
Cdr Scott McDonald, SN-ACN



The United States Power Squadrons has been a leading force in boating education for over a century. Until recently, most of that training took place in the classroom. There were always informal training sessions on the water where a senior member took the time to "show the ropes" to someone less experienced. Such training tended to be unstructured and inconsistent. Over the last 10 years, however, we have seen an explosion in the amount of on-the-water training being conducted. Our methods and techniques are improving, and the quality of our skills-based training is improving tremendously.

One of the biggest reasons we are seeing an increase in on-the-water training is that the US Coast Guard is asking us and organizations like ours to do more on-the-water skills-based training. Studies of recreational boating accidents consistently show that the top contributing factors are related to human behavior. By focusing on skills-based training, the Coast Guard hopes to improve the overall behavior of the boating public and consequently reduce fatalities.

When we think about skill development, we tend to think about hand-eye coordination and dexterity in using controls. That's an important part of on-the-water training, but there's something else equally important – developing situational awareness. This means being able to observe the environment around you and understanding how it affects the operation of your boat.

In the most recent edition of the Coast Guard Proceedings, Ernie Marshburn and Michael Wiedel (both USPS members) elaborate on the concept. They point out that the need for situational awareness is not unique to boating. It turns out that that problems with situational awareness contribute to accidents in many other fields, including medicine, aviation, nuclear power, petrochemical, and law enforcement. The good news is that, like other skills, situational awareness can be developed and improved.

Situational awareness can be broken down into three major components. First, you must understand what is "normal" for a particular environment. This is the baseline that establishes your expectations. Second, you must focus on what is "abnormal" with respect to the environment. Anything that is an exception to the baseline deserves attention and will need to be addressed. The third is mentally preparing a plan of action based on those observations. That plan of action should be established with the exception is identified, and continue to be updated as your understanding evolves.

Situational awareness comes into play in two different ways when we're on the water. The most obvious is with regard to things in the environment that represent a risk to our safety – other vessels, engine problems, shoaling, crab traps, etc. These are all things that can seriously impact your boating activity. You need to assess each risk, and take appropriate action to mitigate those risks. It's an ongoing process of assessment, prioritization, and mitigation. The second aspect of situational awareness is subtler. It has to do with the small things in the environment that directly affect the operation of your boat. At any given time, there is wind, current, momentum of the boat, prop walk, etc. These normally aren't a big concern, but they come into play when you begin to slow down and start maneuvering near other objects that are fixed in the water – docks, boats, markers, etc. It takes careful observation to identify what may affect your maneuvers.

Developing situational awareness is a key benefit of the USPS hands-on training program. But we should all practice those skills every time we go on the water. Scan your surroundings. Pay attention to exceptions. Evaluate and prioritize the risks. Anticipate situations and plan your actions accordingly. You will be a safer and more successful boater as a result.



Focus on Boating Education
Lt/C Bob Stevenson, JN
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Our spring set of courses are nearing exam time. Planning for the future is underway. The instructors designated as Class Chairs have been asked to consider whether their courses could be conducted either in whole or in part as distance-learning opportunities. Some courses depend too much on having the students, their charts or other materials associated with homework, and the instructor all in the classroom at the same time frequently to be able to conduct them as distance learning. However, some courses might be successfully conducted as teleconferences – at least for part of the course. That could be more convenient for the students and the instructor. We might be able to conduct mostly distance-learning courses on a different schedule than our traditional all-classroom courses. So, whether you are an instructor or a potential student, please let me hear from you about your thoughts with regard to any of the courses.

A major change is sweeping Texas. It began in mid-March. Since forever, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) has been a paper-based government agency. We out here in basic boating course teaching world would have the students fill out paper registration forms, we would prepare paper reports on how many people attended each class, and we would send that paper to TPWD along with a check to cover fees paid by the students to have the state certify that they passed the course. Then the TPWD staff would take that paper and enter the information into their database via a process of scanning the forms with automated data entry. Then they would produce certification cards which were mailed to the students.

Now, however, students sign up for the state certification online and we enter check marks and scores online for those who attended. We use a credit card to pay online for the fees. The student certification cards become available online for them to print or download. No more paper. Unfortunately, as with all major changes (particularly when they involve computers), things haven't gone smoothly in the transition. The system was supposed to be up and running last December. Here it is late March and there are still major bugs – some of which are very mystifying. For example, when people try to find classes being put on in any of the locations where we teach, if they find them in the search results, it is because they live in the right Zip Code. For some Zip Codes (such as mine in Friendswood and even 77002 downtown), very few of the classes we offer during 2017 appear in the search results.

The impact from the delayed activation, the temporary use by TPWD of only a partial year's list of available classes, and the problems with search results has been that we had zero students for our March Home Port class. It has been many years since we had no students for a Home Port class. This confirms that we are heavily dependent on people finding us via the TPWD website. However, we now have two people signed-up for the April 1 class at our new location at Ron Hoover Marine in Katy. We must remain hopeful that the new system will be fully functional very soon and that an improved economy will lead to many prospective boaters attending our classes for the rest of the year.

Contact me to join the fun!



Cdr Scott McDonald, SN-ACN and immediate **P/C Chris Leavitt, JN**, flank **SEO Lt/C Bob Stevenson, JN**, who holds the beautiful glass award and citation

Report on the D/21 Conference, April 2017
By Cdr Scott McDonald, SN-ACN

The USPS District 21 Spring Conference took place on April 7 and 8 in Fort Worth, Texas. Our Chief Commander Louie Ojeda was present as the representative from National. Outgoing District Commander Charles Scott presided over the meeting, and District Executive Officer Jud Arnold took over the reins as District Commander at the Change of Watch. The whole event was hosted by Fort Worth Sail and Power Squadron under the direction of Commander Judy Silcox.

Friday was full of working sessions and workshops. **Stf/C Claire McDonald, SN** conducted a general workshop on USPS Technology, including the Information Center and DB2000. I followed up with an advanced program on DB2000. I also presented a program for on-the-water training. Deborah Rothermel conducted a workshop on "Revitalizing your Squadron". We capped off the day with the council meeting of the District Bridge and squadron commanders. That evening we gathered for a fajita dinner along with music and dancing at a western-themed event.

On Saturday, we held the District Conference, followed by a reception in the late afternoon and the Change of Watch in the evening. Most of the proceedings of the conference went as expected. The most significant deliberation was around two recommendations for the Planning Committee that had been sent to the committee for study. The first question was addressing whether or not D/21 should go to two-year terms for bridge officers. The committee recommended against that idea, and no one objected.

The second issue from the Planning Committee was a recommendation to go to one meeting per year instead of two. The reasoning for this is that it is a significant burden to host a conference, and most smaller Squadrons have concluded they do not have the resources. That places an even bigger burden on the larger Squadrons. At the same time, it was expressed that the District could do more to support Squadrons by hosting events at different locations around the District. These might include Co-op Charting or training events, as well as social functions. After much debate, the recommendation of the committee was accepted by a narrow margin, and a resolution was prepared for the Board of Directors to ask approval to go to one meeting. This is the third time in the past 15 years that such a resolution has been delivered from District 21, and it is likely that it will be rejected like the other two.

Houston and its members were fortunate to be recognized for a number of achievements. These include:

- D/21 Joseph P. Hanley Education Award for **SEO Lt/C Bob Stevenson, JN**
- Member Emeritus status (50 Merit Marks) for **P/D/Lt/C Bill Mize, SN**
- Life Membership status (25 Merit Marks) for **Gary Bleisch, JN**
- Distinctive Communicator Awards for the HSPS Website and the *Bay Neigh*
- Cooperative Charting Award for Houston – No. 2 in the nation.
- Cooperative Charting honors for **Lt George Crowl, AP, P/C Chris Leavitt, JN, Stf/C Claire McDonald, SN, Cdr Scott McDonald, SN-ACN, P/C Denny Fegan, AP, and Lt/C Luanne Novak, P.**

Please join me in congratulating all for their achievements.



SEO Lt/C Bob Stevenson, JN receives the
D/21 Joseph P. Hanley Education Award

HSPS Pyrotechnic Training – March 2017
By Cdr Scott McDonald, SN-ACN

On March 12, HSPS conducted training for fire extinguishers and flares. The training was part of the Boat Operator Certification skills for the Advanced Coastal Navigation certification. **P/R/C Tom Derden, SN** was the candidate, and I was the certifier for the event. It's always difficult to know where to conduct training like this. You usually need to get permission from all sorts of groups, and setting of fires and flares often draws unwanted attention. In this case, we were able to use the home of my sister, Carol Heath. She lives in Brookshire, and things just don't draw much attention in the middle of the countryside. The day was blustery, but recent rains assured us there was no risk of fire. Both Carol and her husband Al joined us in the training.

The first part of the training was a live fire drill with different types of fire extinguishers. We poured about half an inch of kerosene in a large aluminum roasting pan. The pan was weighted with a couple of bricks to keep it in place. We lit the kerosene with a butane lighter to get the fire going. The kerosene burns slowly at first, but as the kerosene heats up in the pan, you get a lively fire with flames a couple of feet high. Then we used a CO₂ extinguisher to put out the fire. A quick touch of the lighter reignited the kerosene for others to try extinguishing. After the CO₂ was exhausted, we repeated the exercise with disposable dry chemical extinguishers.

The technique for using both types of extinguishers is similar. You need to aim at the base of the fire where the fuel is to put it out. But you don't want to squat low in front of the fire. Instead, you want to smother it as much as possible, shooting from an angle of 45 to 60 degrees. Lower than that, and you may just scatter the fire. Higher than that, and you risk blowing the fire back towards you.

What's amazing with either extinguisher is exactly how quick and effective they are. Both can put out the fire in just a couple of seconds. But what is a bit unnerving is how fast the extinguishers can run out. A 3-pound dry chemical extinguisher will last around 10 seconds. A 10-pound CO₂ extinguisher will last between 20 and 30 seconds. This is why live training for fire extinguishers is important. When you need to use one, you've got to be ready to go. You don't get any time to practice, so your technique needs to be good.

After the fire was safely out, we moved on to training with flares. The first flare type we used was the standard hand-held day/night flare. The flares we used had expired but were in good shape and lighted easily. The flares typically burn for around a minute. We had an older flare that someone had donated that failed to light, even when exposed to the intense heat of another flare. When using the handheld flares, it's important to hold them downwind and away from yourself. The noxious fumes and molten slag dripping from the flare are quite dangerous, and would easily set a fiberglass or wooden boat on fire.

After that, we tried some aerial flares. We used the 12-gauge shells and the handheld flare gun that come in the popular kit for offshore boaters. Nothing says safety quite like a hand-held 12-gauge plastic shotgun. My experience in training with shells like this in the past is that they don't tend to do well past their expiration date. In this case, however, all the shells fired easily. The small flares were lobbed into the air a couple of hundred feet, and they landed a small distance away in a soggy field. What is rather amazing about these flares is that they are only in the air for about 4 or 5 seconds. If someone weren't looking right at them, they would be missed. A much better solution for getting attention are the SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) flares. Flares meeting the SOLAS designation travel much higher and have a small parachute on the flare. They are also sealed better from the elements. Moisture is the major enemy of flares, and keeping flares dry on board in a marine environment is essential. The small aerial shells are not sealed, and are subject to moisture. The hand-held flares may be a bit more water-resistant, but the igniting surfaces are like a big safety match, and any moisture on them could render them useless.

Finally, we had a chance to test the new electronic strobe flare from Weems and Plath. This is a high-intensity LED that continually flashes an SOS when activated. It is waterproof, shock resistant, floats, and can run for hours on a couple of "C" batteries. It satisfies the USCG requirements for nighttime use, though you need an orange flag to comply with the daytime use. Considering the safety and reliability of the electronic flares, you are likely to see the pyrotechnic flares being phased out in the future.

(Photos on next page.)

HSPS Pyrotechnic Training - March 2017
Photos by Cdr Scott McDonald, SN-ACN



31st Adopt-A-Beach Spring Cleanup Set for Earth Day 2017 – Saturday, April 22

From the Texas General Land Office:

<http://www.glo.texas.gov/the-glo/news/press-releases/2017/march/31st-adopt-a-beach-spring-cleanup-set-for-earth-day-2017-saturday-april-22nd.pdf>

Join in the Earth day Beach Cleanup at a beach near you.

WHO: Thousands of Texans who care about the coast

WHAT: 31st GLO Adopt-A-Beach Spring Cleanup

WHEN: Saturday, April 22nd, Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., Clean-up will be from 9 a.m. to noon

WHERE: 28 sites along the Texas coast <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/texas-adopt-a-beach-2017-coastwide-spring-cleanup-registration-32541519561>

Beaches close to us include Quintana, Surfside, Galveston, and Chrystal Beach.

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USPS National   USCGAUX VSC Request Form

VESSEL SAFETY CHECK (VSC)
 To be completed by a U.S. Coast Guard approved Vessel Examiner. See the back of this form for a brief explanation of required items. A Federal Requirements pamphlet is also available.

Date of VSC: _____
 Decal Awarded: Yes No

Owner/Operator Name: _____
 Registration or Documentation Number: _____

Owner/Operator has attended a CGAUX, USPS, State or _____ Boating Safety Class: Yes No
 HIN: _____
 Length: <16 16-25 26-39 40-65 >65
 Powered by: Gas Diesel Sail Other
 Area of Operations: Inland Coastal
 Type: PWC Open Cabin Other

Location of VSC - County: _____ State: _____
 Replaced decal was: Last Year Outdated First time

VESSEL SAFETY CHECK DECAL REQUIREMENTS		RECOMMENDED AND DISCUSSION ITEMS	
Item	Yes	No	NA
1. Display of Numbers			
2. Registration/Documentation			
3. Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)			
4. Visual Distress Signals (VDS)			
5. Fire Extinguishers			
6. Ventilation			
7. Backfire Flame Control			
8. Sound Producing Devices/Bell			
9. Navigation Lights			
10. Pollution Placard			
11. MARPOL Trash Placard			
12. Marine Sanitation Devices			
13. Navigation Rules			
14. State and/or Local Requirements			
15. Overall Vessel Condition: <i>as applies</i>			
a. Deck Free of Hazards / Clean Bilge			
b. Electrical - Fuel Systems			
c. Galley - Heating Systems			
I. Marine Radio			
II. Dewatering Device & Backup			
III. Mounted Fire Extinguishers			
IV. Anchor & Line for Area			
V. First Aid and PFD Kits (**over)			
VI. Inland Visual Distress Signals			
VII. Capacity/Certificate of Compliance			
VIII. Discussion Items: <i>as applies</i>			
a. Accident Reporting - Owner Responsibility			
b. Offshore Operations			
c. Nautical Charts / Navigation Aids			
d. Survival Tips / First Aid			
e. Fueling / Fuel Management			
f. Float Plan / Weather & Sea Conditions			
g. Insurance Considerations			
h. Boating Check List			
i. Safe Boating Classes			
j. Maritime Domain Awareness			

I certify that I have personally examined this vessel and find it meets the above requirements at the time of this Vessel Safety Check. I am a qualified Vessel Examiner of the: CGAUX USPS State of _____ or _____

Printed Name of the Examiner _____ Examiner Number _____
 Examiner Signature _____ Telephone Number _____

Additional Comments: This is not an official handling for law enforcement purposes. It is recommended that you correct any deficiencies noted. This checklist is furnished for your information. There is no assumption of liability of any kind for advice given or opinions expressed in connection with this examination. By accepting the Vessel Safety Check decal you are pledging to maintain your boat and equipment to the standard of safety exhibited during this examination. Please remove the Vessel Safety Check decal if the boat is sold or no longer meets these requirements.

I am consenting to this Vessel Safety Check of my watercraft with full knowledge that it is provided to me as a public service on a volunteer basis without cost, and I understand and agree that my receipt of a Vessel Safety Check decal shall not constitute or be construed as a warranty or guarantee as to either the qualification, knowledge, or skills of the operator, the seaworthiness of the vessel, or the serviceability or adequacy of any equipment on board.

Owner/Operator Signature: _____ Date: _____

ANSI:Z39.18-1998 Previous edition may be used Original - EXAMINER

VESSEL EXAMINERS "WANTED"

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

Houston Sail and Power Squadron
6910 Bellaire Blvd #15
Houston, Texas 77074

April Birthdays

Donald L. Lipke	4/8
James Eyrl Keith	4/10
James J. Pirrung	4/11
William H. Mize Jr.	4/16
Jingpu Shi	4/16
Jason Palmer Fink	4/19
M. Katherine Fegan	4/24
Elia S. Miller	4/24
Alex T. Carpentier	4/27
Stephanie Shipp	4/28
John S. Hardegree	4/29

From the Boater Safety Committee

The National Boater Safety Committee would like to request that Squadron general members assist their Vessel Examiners during National Boater Safety Week. This would be a great opportunity for members to see the VEs at work and have a better understanding of their value. This would also be an opportunity for members to meet and greet the boaters with "America's Boating Club" information.

Stf/C Bob Bales, AP
Assistant Chair Boating Safety Committee

Amazon Smile Gives Back to HSPS

Are you going to buy something from Amazon? Don't go to amazon.com. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com> so that a percentage of your purchase will be donated to the Houston Sail and Power Squadron.

Yipee Kai Yo! Come to the Trailing Rodeo

Luanne Novak
HSPS Executive Officer

Dave Barry, columnist for the Miami Herald, and one of the funniest men alive, once said that if you want to have a great time around boats, and laugh your ___ off, just get a lawn chair, a cooler full of your favorite beverage and go sit at a busy boat ramp and watch people try to launch and retrieve their boats. You can have an entire day's entertainment for absolutely free.



One way to prevent yourself from becoming the object of someone's amusement (or disdain) is to learn how to back your trailer. I, for one, would like not to take 4, 5, or even 10 tries to get the boat and trailer lined up with the ramp so that I can launch without embarrassing myself and my companions.

To that end, HSPS is going to hold a Trailing Rodeo on Sunday, May 21, 2017 as a Squadron contribution to National Safe Boating Week. Details will follow as we confirm the location and time. If you're interested, either in learning or in teaching, email Luanne Novak at lnovak@sbcglobal.net.