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**Houston Sail
and Power Squadron**

'Where the Cowboys Ride the Sea'

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No. 9

***The Alaska Marine Highway System – Cruising the Inside Passage
with the Locals***
By Dan Huston, AP

Many US Power Squadron members have read about and are familiar with the spectacular cruising grounds along the Northwest coast of Canada and Southeast Alaska, but, I would guess that relatively few are knowledgeable about the Alaska State Ferry, otherwise known as the Alaska Marine Highway System. This is a relatively low-cost option for exploring the Inside Passage that provides the locals with access to nearby towns and villages and provides unsurpassed salt water cruising at reasonable cost. This marine transportation network was established in the 1970s in order to serve remote fishing towns and native villages along Alaska's rugged coast. These small population centers are only accessible by expensive air charter or by water, so the Ferry is vital to the local people. Besides allowing the locals to get around, the ferry boats are great for the more adventuresome tourist and backpacker. Small, but comfortable cabins are available, some with a view, or you can emulate the many European students that I saw who chose to sleep in deck chairs or even pitch a tent on deck. Walk-ons are usually welcome but it's a good idea to call ahead (1-800-642-0066) or book via e-mail (dot.amhs.customer@alaska.gov). The website is: <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/amhs/>

If you have a vehicle, definitely make sure to have reservations. Most RVs, and even trucks with trailers, can normally be accommodated. We enjoyed talking to the booking agents on the phone and at the terminal. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, so if your plans change, it's usually easy to re-route and go a different direction if the mood strikes you. We drove aboard the M/V *Matanuska* in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, with our Nissan Frontier pickup and two large dogs. The Ferry system runs north from Bellingham Washington then up along the Canadian coastline and across Dixon Entrance into Alaska. There is one stop in Canada at Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Remember to bring your passport and papers for your pets if you plan on going ashore in Canada. On board, pets are no problem as long as they stay in your vehicle. We chose to take each of our two dogs for walks at every port of call. On the ferry, you are usually only a few hours away from the next stop, so our animals got plenty of exercise. In each port, you usually have 2 or 3 hours before the next embarkation.

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Poop Sheet November 2017

- November 1
Board of Directors Meeting – Home Port
- November 8
HSPS General Meeting – Pappasito's
2515 S Loop W
- November 18
ABC3 – Home Port
- November 23
Happy Thanksgiving, HSPS!
- December 2
HSPS General Meeting – Christmas Brunch
at Mainly Drinks – La Porte
- December 6
Board of Directors Meeting – Home Port
- December 25
Merry Christmas, HSPS!



Bay Neigh

Official Monthly Publication of
United States Power Squadrons
Houston Sail and Power Squadron
District 21



Editor
Lt Jana Wesson, AP

Assistant Editor

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Bridge

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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. Secretary TBD
Asst. Treasurer..... 1st/Lt Deborah Collings

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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

O Lord God Almighty, who has given to men insight into the nature of the universe, knowledge of the structure of the world and the activity of the elements, the alternation of the solstices and changes of the seasons, the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars; grant us also, we pray Thee, that more excellent gift, knowledge of Thee as Thou has been revealed to us in Thy only-begotten Son, Our Lord.

Amen

COMMANDER'S CORNER



November 2017 Bay Neigh
Cdr Scott McDonald, SN-ACN



The change of the seasons is upon us. The days are getting shorter and cooler. We have some of our most beautiful weather at this time of year, but we know bigger changes are coming, and we need to be prepared to meet them. USPS is going through changes, too. We live in a world of increasing complexity. There are more demands for our time and attention than ever before. If we are to thrive as an organization, we need to be more effective in sharing our message. We need to be able to rise above the noise and confusion and make our voice heard.

The name of our organization has not always been helpful to our cause. The word "Power" usually means electricity, and "Squadron" is a military term for a special unit. Not a lot of clarity there. And if you go looking for USPS on the internet, you'll likely end up on the Postal Service web site. Surveys show that outside of our own membership, only a small fraction of the boating community know who we are. And beyond the boating community, we are almost entirely unknown. With this in mind, the Board of Directors for USPS recently approved the use of "America's Boating Club" as a new brand for USPS.

We've used America's Boating Club as a tagline in the past, but this time it's coming back as something more. It's now going to be an alternate brand. We're not changing our legal name. We'll still be United States Power Squadrons, but we'll be doing business under the America's Boating Club label. Think of the Gap, Inc. This iconic jeans retailer also operates stores under the Banana Republic and Old Navy names. It helps them to expand their identity and reach a larger customer base. We look to do the same thing with the America's Boating Club name. In a few simple words, it clearly identifies us with a member organization that's all about boating. There's also a new tag line: "For boaters, by boaters". Again, a few simple words that paint a clear picture about who we are and the community we serve. The new brand is accompanied by a new logo that combines paddle, power, and sail in a dynamic graphic.

Headquarters has now issued the updated branding manual that outlines the use of the America's Boating Club material. The plan at National is to go through a dual-branding phase, where USPS and America's Boating Club will appear together. After the transition, the USPS label will go to the footer of the page. Think of it like the 7-Up can – when you look at fine print, you see that it's owned by Dr. Pepper. There's a lot of stuff at National that needs to be updated: websites, documentation, books, PowerPoint slides, etc. It's a big task that will take some time to accomplish. Expect to see things in some form of transition over the next couple of years.

As a Squadron, we need to plan our strategy for working with the new brand. There are a lot of choices to be considered. We need to talk about how we identify ourselves and incorporate this new brand in our own marketing. We need to think about our website, our newsletter, our communications, signs, banners, etc. To that end, I've asked members of our leadership team to collaborate with me on our marketing strategy. I would like to have recommendations to the membership at the elections meeting in January. If you are interested in joining the conversation, please let me know.

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Focus on Boating Education
Lt/C Bob Stevenson, JN
832-570-3663
seobobstev@gmail.com



As hurricane season winds down, so do our Squadron's boating educational activities. Normally. **Not this year.**

Richard Lipham has been teaching Engine Maintenance, with some classes at Home Port and others at the Galveston Bay Sail and Power Squadron building on Lakewood Yacht Club for the convenience of the students.

P/C Bill Haddock, AP, has been teaching Marine Electrical Systems – with one student in Maine!

P/C Chris Leavitt, JN, is busy planning to give a Seamanship course to Sea Scouts in the Baytown area on weekends over several months starting in November. Chris has also been developing a grant request to help fund the purchase of kayaks and establishment of a program for teaching people how to be safe on the water while paddling. In addition, Chris has agreed to cook for people at the Sea Star Base Galveston (SSBG) Winter Camp during the week after Christmas.

Winter Camp is a first for Sea Scouts in the Houston area. New Member **Tony Scharp** is Program Director at SSBG, and he asked us to help make this happen. We have agreed to provide a Piloting course, seminars and on-the-water training for the Sea Scouts. Doing that requires volunteers. Fortunately, **P/C Denny Fegan, AP** and **P/Lt/C Robert Campbell, JN** volunteered to help with both seminars and on-the-water training. Denny will be operating Scott McDonald's *Firefly* and Robert will be using his own *John D.* In addition, **Lt/C George Crowl, AP**, has been helping yours truly get up to speed for teaching Piloting, since I haven't taught that previously (I teach Advanced Piloting). If the Camp is a success, Tony hopes to be able to hold another Camp in the summer of 2018 and possibly more going forward to make those Camps traditions for HSPS, SSBG, and the Sea Scout community in central United States. Big dreams, yes, but vision and energy is what a new member can bring to established organizations like HSPS and SSBG.

It is Merit Mark time around the country. Each year in November the Squadrons submit recommendations to the national headquarters for the primary type of recognition available to individuals in USPS – a Merit Mark. Helping the Educational Department accomplish the Squadron's primary mission is a good way to be recognized as someone important to the success of the Squadron – or to just make you feel good if you don't seek public recognition. Teaching basic boating classes is one way to help. Another is to help with the administration of the basic boating classes. Teaching or helping to teach an advanced or elective course is still another way. Seminars need to be taught periodically. We take students out on the water for boating field trips to practice what they learned in the classroom, and we always need boats and captains for those trips. **R/C Scott McDonald, SN-ACN**, has been looking for qualified help to teach the on-the-water and classroom boat operation class. So, there are many ways to contribute through education. One of the nice things about Merit Marks is the way you can do things in support of different departments and they all contribute toward awarding YOU a Merit Mark. I have submitted my recommendations for 2017 to our Commander for consideration and forwarding. To those who I was able to recommend, I say, "Thank you!" To those members who I was not able to recommend, I say, "We have already begun planning for activities in 2018, and could use your help."

Contact me to join the fun!



Commander's Corner
(Continued from Page 2)

It's interesting when you think about it. On one hand, USPS is a custodian of maritime tradition. On the other hand, we are an organization that has continued to evolve. From the first days when power boats were changing the face of recreational boating, we've been innovating. We outgrew the yacht clubs that were our roots and became a national force for boating education and safety. We expanded our role in teaching boating safety to the public, and now we bring on-the-water training to a new level.

This is also not our first name change. Fifteen years ago, there was a strong push to adopt the word 'Sail' into Squadron names to be more inclusive. In 2003, Houston changed its legal name from "Houston Power Squadron" to "Houston Sail and Power Squadron". There were strong traditionalists in the organization across the country that fought the name change, but Houston was able to make the move smoothly. Today, the overwhelming majority of Squadrons, and virtually all new Squadrons have the "Sail and" in their name. The move to America's Boating Club promises to be even more significant. The move has already cleared some significant hurdles. The reaction at the recent Governing Board meeting in Dallas was overwhelmingly positive. It's clear to our leadership that we need to continue our marketing effectiveness in order to thrive.

The Alaska Marine Highway System – Cruising the Inside Passage with the Locals
(Continued from Page 1)

We enjoyed walking the streets of Ketchikan with the dogs since it was cool and clear that day with no rain. That was lucky for us because Ketchikan is known as one of the rainiest spots in the United States. Our next stop was Wrangell Island where we chose to disembark for a few days of 4-wheel drive exploration. The town of Wrangell is small but friendly with two local grocery stores, a couple of marine chandlery/hardware stores and a nice new museum featuring Alaska history and exceptional native wood carvings. There are several old totem poles in town too, along with a replica of a Tlingit Indian chief's lodge. Wrangell is sited near the mouth of the Stikine River, which funnels millions of salmon into lakes and rivers within the Canadian Yukon. For that reason, it is home to world renowned fishing grounds.

It was great fun driving our truck over the many dirt logging roads on the island. We saw several Sitka Black Tail Deer and porcupines, but no bears. And, although we did not dip in a hook this time, on past trips we have had great luck fishing for halibut and salmon. Life in Southeast Alaska revolves around fishing, and we were looking forward to doing our share. However, when the weather turned cold and rainy, we re-boarded the next ferry out. That leg of the trip took us to Juneau (briefly), and then up Lynn Canal toward Haines and Skagway.

Just outside of Juneau, we were treated to the sight of a pod of whales breaching and diving in pursuit of their quarry. You could immediately recognize the tourists in the group on the observation deck because they all grabbed cameras and headed outside. The local people were content to continue reading and talking. I spoke to a woman from Haines who laughed and commented that whales are so common near her town that they are not really something to bother about. Lynn Canal north of Juneau is a spectacular natural fjord, a glacier cut valley that has been flooded by rising sea levels related to the melting of the ice at the end of the last ice age. If the weather is clear, one can see many remarkable waterfalls tumbling down the fjord's high cliffs and on into the sea.

The ferry system was very enjoyable for us, and given the amazing scenery, abundant wildlife and relaxed pace, it's hard to not to recommend this method of seeing Alaska. We arrived later that day in the town of Haines, which has a road connection to the Canadian highway system. From there, you can access the Alcan Highway and travel all the way back to the continental United States, or on into Canada, or into the main part of the state of Alaska. We headed north to take in more of Alaska. After seeing and experiencing so much beauty, we drove off the ferry somewhat reluctantly and into the next stage of our journey north. I'm sure we will be back to see more of the islands of Southeast Alaska in the future.

(Photos on Page 5)

The Alaska Marine Highway System – Cruising the Inside Passage with the Locals
(Continued from Page 4)



The Alaska Ferry M/V *Matanuska*
(from Wikipedia)



In line to board the ferry in Prince Rupert,
British Columbia, Canada



The upper deck.



Inside the ferry at the observation lounge.



Approaching the dock in Wrangell, Alaska.



Lynn Canal Lighthouse near Juneau Alaska.



Waterfalls along Lynn Canal from the deck
of the Alaska ferry.



Alaska Marine Highway ferry routes from the website:
<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/amhs/>

Report on the D/21 Fall 2017 Conference
By Cdr Scott McDonald, SN

This year the District 21 Fall Conference was held aboard the Carnival Cruise Ship *Valor* on a five-day cruise from Galveston to Cozumel. Houston was represented by **Stf/C Claire** and **Cdr Scott McDonald** and **P/C Pete and Sue Hames**.

This is fourth time the District Conference has been held on a cruise ship. The schedule works quite well for our conference needs. The ship departed on Thursday afternoon. The District Conference was held in one of the ship's music venues on Friday morning. We had a formal reception and dinner on Friday evening. On Saturday, we arrived in Cozumel, and everyone was free to visit the port and partake of the many on-shore excursions. On the return leg on Sunday, we had an Operations Training program and several seminars. The ship arrived back in Galveston early on Monday. Overall, the cost of the ship, including all meals and gratuities, is about the same or less than a three-day stay in a hotel with all the necessary conference fees. The only significant drawback is that it becomes difficult for the casual member to attend the conference meeting without committing to the entire event.

The time allotted for the Conference meeting was limited to three hours. It normally takes four to five hours at a regular conference, so the agenda for this meeting was pretty tight. The District Council meeting had been held as an online meeting the week earlier. Most of the material at the conference were the standard reports and messages.

Perhaps the most significant point raised in the meeting was the discussion of the upcoming District Conferences. Traditionally, we hold District Conferences that look a lot like National Meetings. We start with a social function on Thursday evening. On Friday we have seminars, departmental meetings, and the District Council meeting. On Friday evenings, we usually socialize at Squadron hospitality suites. Saturday is the District Conference, followed by a formal function or Change of Watch in the evening. There are a couple of concerns here. First, it takes a lot of Squadron resources to sponsor such an event. Second, the cost for attending the full event is quite steep. And finally, if you have to travel any distance, you will likely give up two days of work.

Some of the smaller Squadrons have not been able to host events because they don't have the resources. Others have the people, but don't have cost-effective venues. That means the rotation for the event is getting shorter. Houston has been asked to host the 2019 Spring Conference, and we last hosted a conference only two years ago. I indicated that we would discuss this internally as a Squadron, but we needed to think about shortening the event and making it easier to attend. This might include holding both the Conference and Council Meetings on Saturday, and dropping the Friday session. If we find a place to hold the meetings on Saturday, we can choose a restaurant for the Saturday evening function. This would cut the conference hotel out of the loop, and allow everyone to choose their own hotel. Committee and department meetings would be held electronically the week before the conference. Travel time and costs would go down, and the quality of the experience would go up. Dallas is working along some of these lines at the 2018 Spring Conference. We will see how they do.

For our excursion in Cozumel, we chose the America's Cup Challenge. This was an opportunity to be the crew for a classic America's Cup 12-Meter sailboat. There were two sailboats, one was *Stars and Stripes*, one of the boats built for the Dennis Conner syndicate that won back the America's Cup from Australia in 1987. The other sailboat was *True North*, a similar boat from a Canadian syndicate in the same year. Both boats were classic 12-Meter boats with wing keels and some of the biggest winches I've seen. Only four changes had been made in the boats since they competed: the mast was lowered, the boom had been raised about 18 inches, lifelines were added, and a roller furling was added. Each boat had a skipper and a couple of deck hands. Guests could watch or take up a station to man a winch.

Claire and I were aboard *Stars and Stripes*. She handled the winch for the boom, while I was her "grinder", manning the double-handled crank that drove the massive drum. We got our training from Ian, our Australian skipper. He gave us direction, and taught us a lot about the boat and the history of the America's Cup competition. Unfortunately, the wind didn't cooperate. We simply didn't have enough to sail. After half an hour of waiting, Ian called it quits and we were towed back to the mooring. It was disappointing not to sail, but the company refunded our fee. We still had a great time and got to see these magnificent boats up close.

(Photos on Page 7)

USPS Website Change

The national United States Power Squadrons public site URL has changed from usps.org to beyondboating.org. Please be sure to update your bookmarks!

*Report on the D/21 Fall 2017 Conference
(Continued from Page 6)*



Pinpoint (How GPS is changing Technology, Culture, and our Minds)

Greg Milner
W. W. Norton & Company
\$27.95

This is an excellent book that details the Global Positioning System that is ubiquitous in our modern society.

Author Greg Milner discusses the history of the GPS system and how it was conceived as a more accurate method to target bombs, because of the lack of precision in strategic bombing evolved into the carpet bombing of World War II and Vietnam. The scientists that used the whisper from satellites in space to determine location, the manufacturers of the early GPS receivers and how they came of age in the Gulf War.

Since then it has taken on the role of a free utility – available to all at no cost. GPS is used in a myriad of ways that we are not aware of. The ultra-precise time is used by electrical utilities among other industries.

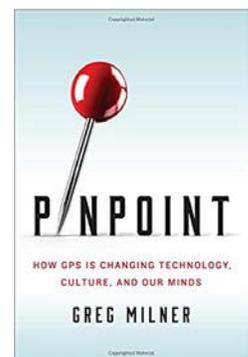
Our handheld GPS receivers are measuring the time differential between visible satellites and calculating a 3 dimensional position. To put the time accuracy into perspective, if the time between satellites were off by 0.000001 seconds (one millionth) the calculated position would be off by 200 miles.

Milner also discusses how the stimulus and response of our interaction with a GPS mapping unit (mental strip maps) could be affecting our cognitive mapping within our minds and how this could be reducing our neural connections in our brains.

There are a number of interesting threads in this book, including the navigational prowess of the Polynesian Tupia (using a mental sidereal compass of the stars among other knowledge bases) and his interaction with Captain Cook starting in 1769 to using the extreme accuracy of Global Positioning to measure tectonic plate movement of a few centimeters a year (1 -2 inches) to try to anticipate earthquakes.

Well researched with extensive notes.

P/R/C Bruce Albertson SN-ACN





UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Inspections and Compliance Directorate

November 13, 2017
Washington, DC

Safety Alert 12-17

Don't be inflamed about what you have to do!
Kidde has made this extinguisher recall and replacement easy for you.

This safety alert provides information related to Kidde brand fire extinguishers. Nearly 40 Million extinguishers involving 134 different models have been recalled. These fire extinguishers were manufactured between January 1, 1973 and August 15, 2017, including models that were previously recalled in March 2009 and February 2015. The extinguishers were sold in red, white, and silver cylinder colors and are rated as either ABC or BC.

The Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that all persons owning fire extinguishers to read the following information and access the appropriate hyperlinks for specific recall information.

This product recall involves two styles of Kidde disposable fire extinguishers: Plastic handle fire extinguishers and plastic push-button fire extinguishers. This recall does not include Kidde Professional or Badger branded fire extinguishers. Units with metal handles/valve assemblies are not included in the recall.

[Read the Full Announcement on the Consumer Product Safety Commission Website Frequently Asked Questions](#)

View the following Fire Extinguisher ID Guide links to determine if you have an affected model:

[Plastic Handle Fire Extinguishers](#)

[Push-Button Fire Extinguishers](#)

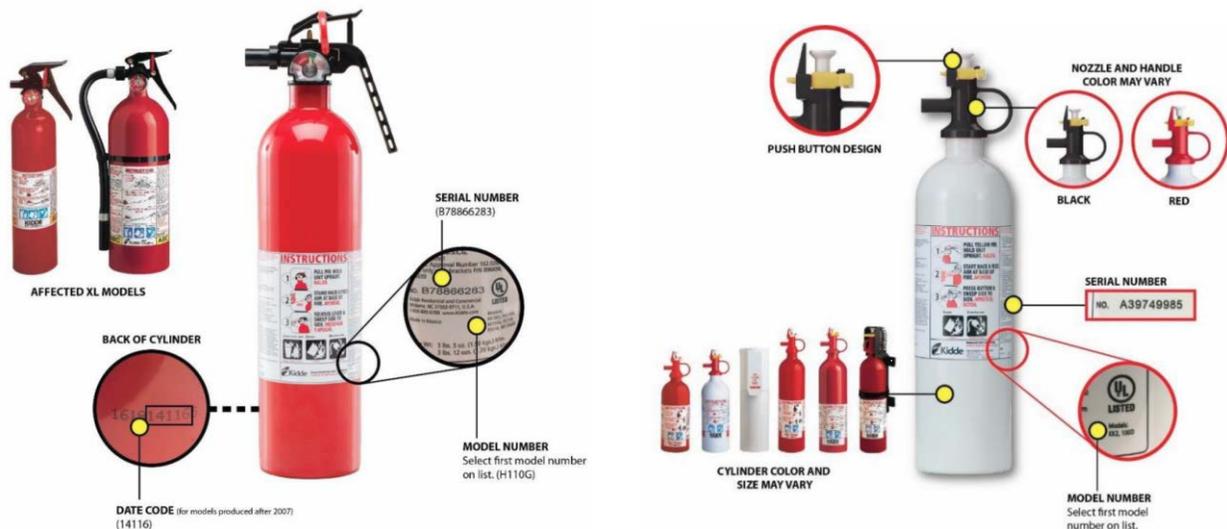
If you believe that you may have an affected model before continuing, from the Fire Extinguisher ID Guide to locate and collect your Model Number, Serial Number, and Date Code (if applicable). The Date Code is a 10-digit number printed on the side of your fire extinguisher, near the bottom. Digits five through nine represent the day and year of manufacture, and these five numbers are what you will need to proceed. When you are ready to proceed, select your unit. Note: If you have a push button model used on a personal watercraft such as a JET SKI®, be sure to select the personal watercraft option.

[Plastic Handle](#)

[Push Button](#)

[Push Button Watercraft](#)

Please note the images on the following page for extinguisher identification guidance. This Safety Alert is provided for informational purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational or material requirement. Developed and distributed by the Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis, Washington DC. Questions may be sent to HQS-PF-fldr-CG-INV@uscg.mil.





Christmas Brunch



When: December 2, 2017
11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Where: Mainly Drinks
223 W Main St
La Porte TX, 77571

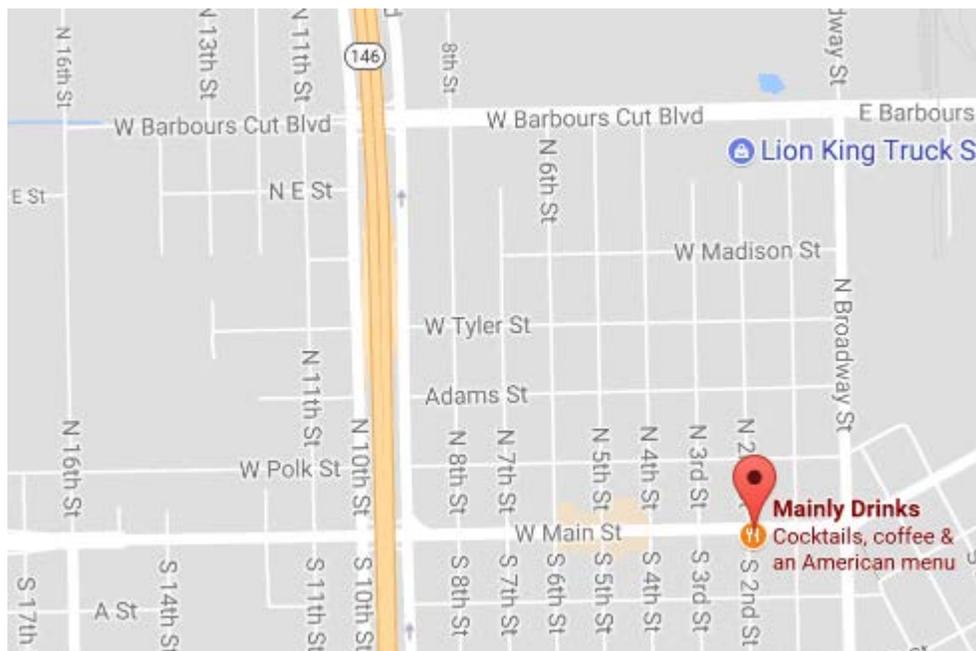
Cost Depends on the menu items selected by each person.

Come celebrate the holiday season with HSPS!

This is the general membership monthly meeting for December. Guests are welcome.

Please RSVP to Scott Mc Donald by November 30:

Phone: 713-303-8049 E-mail: scottmcdonald@comcast.net



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

November Birthdays

Niki Serakiotou	11/1
Van Z. White	11/2
Marvin V. Morris	11/6
C. H. 'Dutch' Hotalen Jr.	11/7
Kathy K. Kehoe-Lee	11/7
Tony Scharp	11/10
Kyli S. Doucette	11/11
Richard A. Fisher	11/16
Seth Charna	11/17
Kevin Bennett	11/21
Jean L. Hamilton	11/22
David W. Walker	11/24
John H. Crowe	11/30
Dale J. Wilpers	11/30



For Sale/Trade – \$1200. OBO

On the beach---Sunset Fishermen's Village in Playa del Carmen, MX: 2 BR Condo, week of 12/16 to 12/23, 2017. Complete kitchen and sleeps 6.

Contact Carl Stendebach at 281-440-5408.

Show Your Pride in Your Membership in HSPS!

You can express pride in your membership in Houston Sail and Power Squadron and USPS.

How? Easy. And cheaply, too!

If you have never received your Squadron membership nametag – or you've long-since lost it like another member or two have done -- \$7 is all it takes to get a new one. And it only takes five bucks to get a Squadron burgee embroidered on your favorite pull-over or t-shirt.

Here's how it works:

- At each Squadron Dinner Meeting, our Treasurer will provide a signup sheet for new or replacement nametags and/or getting the Squadron Burgee embroidered on a member's shirt. Before the meeting, you may purchase the shirt from whatever source you prefer.
- Just fill out the sign-up sheet provided.
- Please pay \$7 for the name tag and \$5 for the embroidery – cash please to make life easier for the Treasurer.
- The collected shirts will be tagged with the member's name and be taken to M-R Design, 6611 Bissonnet #110, for processing.

They should be returned in time for the next monthly meeting or soon thereafter in the unlikelihood that there may be a backup in orders.

