

# Bay Neigh

Official Publication of  
**America's Boating Club Houston**  
*'Where the Cowboys Ride the Sea'*

Vol. LXXI

**October 2018**

No. 5

## **Marketing America's Boating Club Houston!** *By Lt/C Susie Becvar, P*

Our Marketing Department, headed by **Scott and Kelly Cromack**, put on a spectacular event. Houston Sail and Power Squadron (America's Boating Club Houston) promoted public outreach, Vessel Safety Checks, our boater education courses and on-the-water training, displays of safety equipment and finally talk about what we do in general. There was a huge display of PFD's and tons of training material and lots of dialogue.

The event location was on the boardwalk by the Waterpoint Marina restaurant/public boat dock area.

The event was attended by the TPWD Game Warden, Montgomery County Sheriff's Department and members of America's Boating Club Houston.

Quite a number of vessel safety inspections were completed, and more were on the way – along with the stormy weather! The day was cut short, but we are grateful for the opportunity and we are going back. The concept was solid and will be used with other VSC events.



## **Poop Sheet Sept/Oct 2018**

- September 29  
Hands-on Training: Basic Powerboat – Lakewood Yacht Club  
Women in the Outdoors Fishing Camp – Spring Creek Greenway Nature Center
- September 30  
HSPS General Meeting – Dinner and Family Nautical Games – Home Port
- October 3  
Board of Directors Meeting – Home Port
- October 13  
ABC3 – Ron Hoover RV & Marine  
VSC – Alexander Deussen Park
- October 20  
Kayaking Level 1 – Galveston Island State Park
- October 23  
Radar Seminar – Home Port
- October 27  
Hands-on Training: Basic Powerboat – Lakewood Yacht Club
- November 2-4  
D/21 Fall Conference – Oklahoma City
- November 7  
Board of Directors Meeting – Home Port
- November 10  
HSPS General Meeting – M/V Sam Houston  
Kayaking Level 1 – Galveston Island State Park
- November 17  
First Aid/CPR/AED Class – Home Port



## Bay Neigh

Official Monthly Publication of  
America's Boating Club - Houston  
District 21



October 2018 Bay Neigh  
Cdr Cathy Leavitt, P



Editor  
Lt Jana Wesson, AP

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Houston, Texas 77074  
www.uspshouston.org

### Bridge

Commander..... Cdr Cathy Leavitt, P  
Executive Officer ..... Lt/C Susie Becvar, P  
Educational Officer ..... Lt/C Alan W. Cross, AP  
Administrative Officer ..... Lt/C George H. Crowl, Jr., AP  
Secretary ..... Lt/C Kyli S. Doucette, S  
Treasurer..... Lt/C Monica K. Cross, P  
Immediate Past Cdr..... P/C Scott. McDonald, SN

### Squadron's 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenants

Asst. Educational Officer. .... 1<sup>st</sup>/Lt Monica K. Cross, P  
Asst. Secretary ..... TBD  
Asst. Treasurer ..... P/Lt/C Phyllis Stendebach, P

### Executive Committee

All Bridge Officers... Chris Leavitt, N  
William E. Blan, S Scott McDonald, SN  
Scott Cromack, P Steve Sheward  
John L. Glaeser, SN Carl Stendebach, JN  
Daniel C. Huston, AP Robert W. Stevenson, JN  
Jana Wesson, AP

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

### Another Brick in the Wall

Not being given to a lot of introspection, it hit me like a wet fish in the face when I was looking for something in the Squadron Roster. I noticed the list of previous Squadron Commanders. It starts with **P/C W.E. Humphreville, Jr, AP**, Commander in 1949, and ends with **R/C Scott D. McDonald, SN**, and Commander in 2017. And next year my name will be on the list. On one hand, cool; on the other hand, I'm just another brick in the wall.

That wall has a lot of significance! For a long time the Squadron has been engaged with keeping people safe on the water. That is no small, unimportant task. According to TPWD, there are about 85,000 registered boats in Harris and surrounding counties. In addition to the day to day work of education the boating public, we are also a repository of boating knowledge. Chris's father always wanted to learn celestial navigation. He never did. Had he taken the time and come to us, he would have learned that skill. Engines, Trip Planning, Tides and Currents, RADAR – if it is important to boaters, there is a class on it, and if there is a class – Houston teaches it.

So, that puts things in perspective. We've been doing our job in the boating world for a long time. I don't see us folding our sails or motors and going away in the foreseeable future.

On a related note, we are coming into the time of the year where we look back and do the Star Squadron Report to District. It's where we tell the other Squadrons in the District what we have accomplished. It's also the time of the year where Merit Marks are awarded to Squadron members who have contributed to accomplishing the Squadron's work. If you believe that you have contributed and you have not received an e-mail concerning Merit Marks by mid-November – let me know. The Merit Mark Documentation guy is old and fallible – I know, I married him. This is not about blowing your own horn; it is about being rewarded for doing an important job.

### PRAYER

O Lord, Heavenly Father, source of all power and might, and giver of all good gifts, grant us, we pray Thee, the vision to set a straight course in the path of greater service toward our fellow man.

Give us grace so to help him, that by our own good example and by instruction in the teachings of the Squadron, he may become a better man and greater servant of Thee.

In Thy name we ask it.

Amen

John Osgood Hart, Past USPS Chaplain





**Focus on Boating Education**  
 Lt/C Alan W. Cross, AP  
 281-451-1146  
[uspsseohouston@gmail.com](mailto:uspsseohouston@gmail.com)



*Together, we make boating better*

**Upcoming Courses.** Currently scheduled and “open for enrollment” are courses this Fall for *Seamanship, Engine Maintenance, Advanced Piloting, and Electrical Systems*. All are currently scheduled for Home Port. The courses are being held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Home Port will be busy every week for the next several months. Have friends that want or need the education? There is time to sign up. Check the website (<https://americasboatingclubhouston.org/education/>) for details on dates and specifics for the course.

The *Marine Communication Systems* course kicked off several weeks ago with six (6) members in attendance. The fun concept is the course is being held at members' homes on a rotating schedule. A BSA Sea Scout Ship in the Baytown area is planning on taking our Piloting course, and that will be between 9 – 14 persons!

Plans are formulating for course offerings in early 2019 thru the summer. If you want a course or don't see a course listed, the website has a 'request a course' function. So, if you have a need or desire for a specific course that is not currently on the calendar, make a request for a course. Remember that with a group of 5 or more, considerations are always given to the time, date and location. Our goal is to have safer boaters through education.

**September!! Sign up a Friend.** Efforts continue with other Committees to “sell our program” of education by reaching audiences outside our general scope of education. With a good number of folks taking the ABC3 course, taking the On The Water course, our increasing membership, and folks in the community taking online courses, there is a wealth of people who could (and should) benefit from our training. For all the membership; take a moment and make that positive decision to take the course you've always wanted to take – and bring along some of your friends. Our courses are fun, and more fun if you know a student or three. Our Sea Scout outreach is beginning to show some fruits of continuous contact.

**Ham Radio Class is Making!** Thanks to **P/C Bill Haddock, AP**, in early 2019, the Houston Squadron will organize and host an amateur (ham) radio series of classes and examinations. If you are not a licensed ham radio operator, this is a good way to learn and earn your license. If you are licensed, there will be studies to guide you to the advanced levels. This course will be open to folks both in-and-out of the Squadron.

**Coming Up – RADAR.** The RADAR seminar is being offered on Tuesday evening, October 23, 2018, from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Home Port. See more information and register online at <https://americasboatingclubhouston.org/events/radar-seminar/>. You can come to the seminar for Free, but you need to register and pay if you want the certificate and official recognition for your BoC.

**Thanks to the Instructors.** These are the men and women who 'make' the Education Department work. Each is giving of their time, talents and rich history. When you see them, just say “thanks for making better boaters”. The 23 Instructors we have do an excellent job!

- |                 |              |              |                |                 |                 |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Susie Becvar    | George Crowl | John Glaeser | Holly Huston   | Scott McDonald  | Carl Stendebach |
| Larry Behrmann  | Tom Derden   | Bill Haddock | Cathy Leavitt  | Al Meyer        | Bob Stevenson   |
| Robert Campbell | Denny Fegan  | Pete Hames   | Chris Leavitt  | Ed Roland       |                 |
| Monica Cross    | Rick Fisher  | Dan Huston   | Richard Lipham | Stephen Sheward |                 |

**Seminars.** The Education Department is currently looking for a “USPS Seminars Chair”. Our 2-Hour Seminar series covers a wide variety of topics any boater can put right to use. Many seminars can be taken online, or in person, with a live instructor. We have a complete set of seminars ready to deliver. With the advent of a marketing push and our soon-to-be-released website, these are great courses for all our audience types. Seminars are also a requirement for several of the Boat Operator Certifications. If you are interested, please contact me. I will work along-side the Seminars Chair to build this part of our training.

**Course Promotions and Target Audiences.** Each member of the Squadron has insight into different groups, organizations and associations that would provide the Education Department with students. Currently there is an ongoing program to reach all the Sea Scouts, BSA in the greater Houston area. A number of other programs within the Boy Scouts have expressed interest in our basic training. Several Girl Scout Troops have contacted us and are pleased that our basic training can help with their advancement activities.

**Contact.** To contact me, best way is [uspsseohouston@gmail.com](mailto:uspsseohouston@gmail.com) or call me on the cell at 281-451-1146.

## ***Kayak Instructor Training a Success!***

*By P/C Chris Leavitt, N*

This weekend past, three members of the Squadron completed American Canoe Association Introduction to Kayaking Training at Northshore Park in the Woodlands. The class consisted of skills demonstration and instruction by the students, as well as kayaking technical by the students.

The three, **Lt/C Susie Becvar, AP**, **Lt/C Monica Cross, S**, and **Karen Taylor** are now certified to teach the kayaking skills course offered by the Squadron. They, in addition to long time Instructor Pat Morin, will provide the backbone of the Squadron's Kayak Outreach program.



Ground School



Class together on the water



Paddling together



Cooling off



There is hot and there is Texas Hot



Susie Becvar Teaching



Monica Cross Teaching



Karen Taylor Teaching

## *Lessons from a Duck Boat Tragedy*

*By R/C Scott McDonald, SN*

On July 18, a duck boat carrying 31 tourists sank on Table Rock Lake near Branson, Missouri. Severe thunderstorms brought winds of 60 miles an hour. The boat struggled in the driving wind and rough water, and eventually foundered. 17 people lost their lives in the incident. A video showing the last few moments of the struggling vessel went viral on the internet. Investigations were initiated by the Coast Guard and the National Transportation Safety Board. Weeping family members showed up on national TV shows, and lawsuits followed soon after. The investigations continue, but it will take months or even years to identify all the contributing factors and assess the appropriate blame. But we don't need to wait for the final outcome to identify critical issues that can impact our own safety as recreational boaters.

**Situational Awareness:** Boating is an intrinsically hazardous activity. You are venturing into a dangerous environment. Conditions and factors are constantly changing around you. This includes the weather above you, what's below the surface of the water, and what's going on in the water around you. You need to maintain situational awareness at all times. This means that you must constantly evaluate your situation in real time, identify the risks as they evolve, and take action as necessary to reduce or eliminate those risks. In the case of the duck boat, the storm they encountered was clearly unusual, and may have been difficult to forecast. However, as boaters, we need to be able to recognize weather changes and take appropriate action.

**Boat Design:** Every boat design is a compromise of features, and none more so than the duck boat. Incorporating the features of both a truck and a boat, it is less than optimal for each role. This particular duck boat had also been heavily modified from its original configuration as a troop carrier. In particular, seats had been added and a hard awning had been added to provide shade for the passengers. This likely added weight to the boat. Moreover, this additional weight was up high, raising the center of gravity and likely decreasing the stability of the boat. The awning also created a potential impediment to the many passengers that had precious few seconds to evacuate the boat.

**Wearing Life Jackets:** None of the duck boat passengers wore life jackets that day. The passengers received a safety briefing before departing the shore, but according to one report, they were told they wouldn't need the life jackets. It would have been difficult for the passengers to don the life jackets on the crowded boat. It's also possible that the awning structure would have prevented some passengers wearing life jackets from exiting the boat as it sank. In any case, the most fundamental safety device for boaters was rendered useless.

**Boats Can Sink:** Regulations require that all boats under 20 feet in length contain basic flotation that will prevent the boat from sinking, even if it becomes swamped. Most manufacturers extend this to their boats under 26 feet in length, and a few incorporate flotation in larger boats, but most vessels over 26 feet in length do not have built-in flotation, meaning they will sink if they take on significant amounts of water. Because the bilge is usually covered, it may be difficult to detect significant water until the boat is nearing the limit of its buoyancy. That means there may be only a few seconds between the discovery of a problem and the submersion of the boat. This should be a sobering fact when you consider that most large boats have multiple openings in the hull below the waterline. These are used for propulsion, steering, cooling, sanitation, live wells, etc. In the case of the duck boat, you have additional openings for the drive train. Damage or poor maintenance on the seals of any of these openings increase the risk of water entering into the boat. We know that the duck boat was riding low in the water when it sank. It had a full load of passengers, and likely had been taking on water for a while. If the bilge pump was operating, it likely couldn't keep up with the amount of water coming in. Water splashing over the hood and in through the windows finished the process.

**Impaired Judgement:** Boating requires that we make a lot of decisions that can affect our safety. This often means that we need to weigh our personal desires and interests against the risks that we face. It's important to make sure that we don't allow the wrong things to cloud our judgement. In the case of the duck boat, you have a commercial operator of a small seasonal business. There is a strong interest in attracting and servicing customers. The vessel operators were also likely paid by the hour. A full load of customers would create a significant financial incentive to both the business and the vessel operators. This might lead the operator to downplay risky weather conditions. Another thing to consider is that there were actually two duck boats in operation at the time. It's part of our human nature that we behave differently in groups. We become emboldened by the group, and feel less individual responsibility for decisions. We can achieve great things working together, but we may also find ourselves doing things we would never consider when we're on our own. In this case, it would not be hard to believe that the operators of either boat might not have ventured out in the conditions that day, but in the presence of each other, the operators might be more inclined to participate in risky behavior. It's important not to let things like this impair our own judgement and lead us to poor decisions. We need to recognize factors like personal incentives or peer pressure and not let them override our assessment of the risks that we face.

## **August Meeting – Matagorda Fishing Rendezvous**

*Photos by P/C Chris Leavitt, N*

About 20 members of America's Boating Club – Houston, including five Past Commanders and the current Commander met at **Gary and Julie Bleisch's** place in Matagorda for a day of fishing, fun, and good food.



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### **From the National Membership Committee**

*By R/C Robert Howd, JN-CN*

#### **New Member Benefits**

The United States Power Squadrons® are always adding to the benefits that being part of the organization entitles you to. Some recent additions include:

- LTC Global is Long Term Care Insurance. As a USPS member you can save more when you prepare for the future. Learn how in a free educational webinar that can be found on the Membership Benefits Home page on the National website.
- Vistaprint offers an assortment of discounted business card templates for general members and Vessel Examiners – easily edited and promotes "America's Boating Club®".

More information and the full list of member benefits can be found on the Member Benefits Home page.

#### **From the Member Benefits Committee**

**Active members are needed to work on the Member Benefits Committee!**

If interested in learning more, please contact [Stf/C Andy Hyman, SN-ACN](#); or complete the USPS Resume Form.

America's Boating Club

INVITES YOU ABOARD

**M/V SAM HOUSTON**

FOR A SPECIAL

**Dinner Tour**



November 10, 2018 | 6-7:30pm

7300 CLINTON DRIVE, GATE 8 HOUSTON, TEXAS

Please RSVP to George Crowl at [george.h.crowl@gmail.com](mailto:george.h.crowl@gmail.com) or call 832-298-0040



**PORT HOUSTON**  
THE INTERNATIONAL PORT OF TEXAS

## 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](mailto:beakboatgirl@me.com)

America's Boating Club – Houston  
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## Aug/Sept/Oct Birthdays

Robert Elberger	8/1
Judy White	8/1
Bill D. Fussell	8/4
Regina J. Stevens	8/6
R. Craig Shipp	8/8
William M. Stevens Jr.	8/9
Merton M. Osborne	8/13
Mary M. Derden	8/17
Sabrina Gilbert	8/19
Al Meyer	8/22
Gregory L. Dejarnett	8/30
Jeannine K. Garnett	9/3
S. Dennis Fegan	9/4
Shibu Rajan	9/4
Lana Huston	9/6
Gary A. Delzer	9/8
Tony Lee	9/16
Janet E. Glaeser	9/19
Rafael Ramos	9/19
Patrick Cummings	9/21
Holly H. Huston	9/21
Spyridon Lazaratos	9/22
Carolina Rosales-Ramos	9/22
Gary L. Bleisch	9/24
Marcus Le	9/24
James Franco	9/25
Scott D. McDonald	9/27
Mary K. Thompson	9/27
Jana Wesson	9/29
Larry J. Smith	10/3
Julie R. Bleisch	10/5
Robert William Stevenson	10/5
Phyllis W. Stendebach	10/11
Troy Hogan	10/15
Marsha L. Smith	10/17
Michael S. Mankins	10/20
Edwin John Roland	10/20
Deborah L. Collings	10/22
Victor W. Pardo	10/28
Robert J. Campbell	10/30
Di-enid Clarke	10/31

## New Squadron Website

By Lt Steve Sheward, Webmaster

As The United States Power Squadron national organization moves forward with the America's Boating Club branding, our Squadron is moving right along with them.

We have a new domain name – [americasboatingclubhouston.org](http://americasboatingclubhouston.org), to which the old domain is now forwarded. The new site has a modern feel and is designed to be more user-friendly. It also boasts an event registration system, as well as a store to sell items, like books and other materials. We have also created our own online membership application, so folks can sign up directly with us, reducing confusion at national, and prospective members can pay for their membership right after they submit the form.

Take a look at the site today – <https://americasboatingclubhouston.org>. Create an account. Register for an event. Tell your friends about it, and get some excitement brewing for our squadron activities.



Stay Safe on the Water - Get a Vessel Safety Check!



### Membership

America's Boating Club is the nation's premiere boater safety membership. Members have access to on- and off-the-water activities, cruises and rendezvous.



### Education

For more than 100 years, we have provided boaters with unsurpassed education on the water, in the classroom and online. Our educational events include:



### Services

We are a civic-minded organization. Our programs are provided to the public to raise awareness of boating safety issues, provide specific