

BELLVIEWS

The Monthly News Magazine of the
Bellevue Sail and Power Squadron

April 2006, Vol. 44 No. 09

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ADVERTISERS NEEDED

contact P/Lt/C Duncan Milloy, S,
425-475-1131, dmilloy@comcast.net

New Website Material

2006 Rendezvous Schedule and Details

On-Line Class Registration

www.bellevuepowersquadron.org

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**Monthly Dinner Meeting – 05 April 2006
Pasta Feed and Auction
All You Can Eat Pasta for \$16.**

Reservations (or cancellations of permanent reservations) are required and need to be confirmed **before Noon Saturday** prior to the dinner meeting. Make your reservations (or cancellations) with:

Catherine Keating
206-275-4493, *catherinek@bbxpress.net*

- √ There are NO extra meals. Do not expect to dine if you have not made a reservation.
- √ People with reservations who don't cancel by Saturday will be billed for their meals. Miss two reservations and loose your spot.
- √ **Get on the permanent reservation list and avoid the hassle of phoning each month. Tell Catherine, "Put us on the List."**
- √ We accept Visa and MasterCard, as well as cash and local checks. The check-in table closes at 1900; no late arrivals, please.

Location & Time

Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club, 9927 Meydenbauer Way SE, Bellevue. Members and guests meet from 1800 for a social hour on the Top Deck. Dinner is served at 1900 and the meeting will be adjourned by 2100.

Dress Code

While the Bridge members often wear uniforms to the dinner meetings, the general membership wears appropriate mufti attire or business casual at the dinner meetings. For the Bridge, the uniform for April is *Casual*.

Program—Annual Auction Fundraiser

This is it — the Annual Fundraiser and Pasta Feed. Auction Chair Lt Sherry Macklin, AP, and her crew have been working hard for the past several months to line up some great items for the called and silent auctions. See something in the silent auction you want? Just swoop in and write down your winning bid. Stay awake, last minute bids are common!

You still have time to bring in your silent auction items, but please contact Sherry as to what you are bringing. This allows her crew to catalog the items and to prepare space.

Bring friends along and let them enjoy the fun and excitement of the auction. The income helps the squadron. More details on Page 7.

From the Commander

Commander Jean Miller, AP



It seemed like it would never end, but here we are, at the end of my term as commander. At the last dinner meeting, when the nom com chair read off the slate of incoming officers, my name wasn't on it for the first time in five years. Onlookers reported that I had tears in my eyes, but that was probably gas. And my eyes were red from reading so much squadron email. After all, I have functioned as the squadron complaint department for two years.

But I digress. Fear not, dear friends, that you have been abandoned! In my self appointed role as giver of gratuitous advice, I am documenting the following hard gained insights so that the legacy will live on.

Know When to Hold 'em, and When to Fold 'em

If a new member attends the orientation party, then bitterly complains that he was patronized and otherwise mistreated by an old timer who you know would not shoo away a fly, politely express concern, because even the best people have bad days. If that newbie then rants that he wants his money back because he was not able to find his way to a classroom due to inadequate signage, even though 67 other people managed to, be noncommittal. When that person explains to you that he cannot be expected to take exams as other students do, because he doesn't like the stress and everyone has always understood before and given him the class credit anyway, say nothing and back slowly away. Do NOT call this person to remind him to renew his membership at the end of the year. This, by the way, is kind of a true story.

Enough is Enough

Three emails on any given subject is one too many, three paragraphs in an email is two too many, and three sentences in a paragraph in an email is one too many. It doesn't matter if you're recently retired and are "finding yourself" or if you "live on email." (Meaning you have no life except email, which allows you to feel like you're accomplishing something by making words appear on a screen.) You are becoming a societal nuisance if you violate the above rules and eventually will be

(Continued on page 14)

Change in Dinner Permanent Reservation Policy

Having a Permanent Dinner Reservation works well for members who attend most or all of the monthly dinner meetings. However, failing to cancel a reservation before the cutoff date means that you will be billed for the dinner since the squadron has to pay for all meals ordered. As of 1 March 2006, members with permanent reservations who miss two consecutive dinners without cancellations will have their standing reservation eliminated. Not having a reservation may mean that you won't have a dinner.

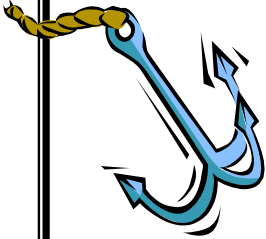
BELLEVUE-AGATE PASS JOINT RENDEZVOUS

Brownsville Marina, 28 thru 30 April 2006

SAFE BOATING SEMINARS

ANCHORING and MAN OVERBOARD DRILL

Come on out for our first rendezvous of the year and get reacquainted with the members of the Agate Pass Sail and Power Squadron. Also become a safer and more secure boater. There have been conversations about a lack of experience in anchoring techniques. Some longtime members have acknowledged never anchoring because we have never had on-the-water training. It is time to get that program started.



Last month, Mike Heinrich outlined his details for the anchoring and man overboard seminar planned during this cruise. Mike and other skilled members will implement the plan with handouts to reduce the fears, and then proceed to the bay to deploy anchors. Those who prefer onshore seminars may do CPR, VHF radio practice, and even GPS. A rotation from anchoring may work well for smaller groups afloat. A "Plan B" in case the wind is just too strong for safe anchoring practice will focus on the above subjects more intently.



Saturday's social events are pretty much as last year's with wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres at 1800 in the Brownsville Yacht Club building. Wine will be furnished by the Brownsville Deli and will be available for purchase either by the bottle or case at a discount. The cost for the wine tasting has not yet been determined. Bring your favorite hors d'oeuvres to share. Dinner is on your own.

Children are encouraged to attend. Make sure each wears a PFD while on the docks or boat. Plans for breakfast on Sunday are being developed.

Come by boat or car. Motels are available in nearby Silverdale.

Register by emailing or calling Lonnie Butler, lonnie4@gte.net, 425-827-3740. Your early response would be greatly appreciated to help us plan more carefully.



Sea Belles Corner

President Karl E. Lang, SN



I'm always impressed by this group of "Belles". They showed up to be honored on Founders night and they showed up to be counted on our Annual Meeting night. They take what we're about very seriously and so are able to accomplish a lot. Still they have fun doing it. I am happy to report that all the effort that Barbara, Gretchen, John and the others who worked to re-format and update our bylaws has born fruit. With DSL speed (lightning is slow by modern measures), we received approval by the squadron Executive Committee, the Sea Belle general membership and the National Auxiliary chair.

We also elected our new bridge and committee chairs for the 2006-2007 term at the annual meeting and they are rarin'to go before they are even sworn in, which, by the way, is what I next wish to address.

The Sea Belles 2006 Change of Watch will be held Friday, 12 May, at the Issaquah Elks Lodge. We invite all USPS and Auxiliary members, friends and guests to join us and we extend a special invitation to all District 16 members who will be in the area attending the Educational Seminar the next day on Mercer Island. Meet the "girls and boys" who do so much not only for Bellevue squadron but for District functions as well (including hosting your Saturday lunch at the seminar). Enjoy low cost beverage services, fun poking and a prime rib dinner for \$15. There is a gift for the attendee who travels the furthest to be there. All the details in the next issue but mark your calendar right NOW!

Thus far, we have had an all-around good year in all areas of functions, finances, fun and folks and have no intention of stumbling down the home stretch. Last year I reported that the Sea Belles was no longer the largest auxiliary in USPS—a couple of other auxiliaries grew and our membership declined. Since then, we have sworn in new members at almost every general meeting, including four at the last meeting, and we expect another four at the next meeting. This will put our membership at around 83 and back in contention for Top Dog!. Grrr!

One last word!

Don't miss the fun at the April Auction. This is a "more the merrier" kinda shindig and remember only YOU can make a difference!

See you there. ❖



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Seminar on Radar on Offense and Defense

Lt/C Nadeane Rutledge, SN, SEO

As part of National Safe Boating Week, Seattle Sail and Power Squadron presents its popular seminar “Radar on Offense and Defense.”

A radar display is not intuitive! We will use a computer simulator to see what radar screens look like and how the targets move with each sweep. It requires practice to understand what it is telling you, and what it cannot tell you.

On offense, the objective is to not be surprised when the 18 knot ferry pops out of the fog ½ mile away: basic techniques to use your radar to avoid other boats, navigate in tight quarters and anchor.

On defense, realize that commercial boats use radar in good weather and bad, with automatic target trackers. There are a few simple tips for making their radar work for your benefit.

When buying a radar, the specifications can be pretty overwhelming (incidentally “36 mile” is not a useful spec). We’ll review the important tradeoffs in resolution, power, displays, signal processing, mounting, networks and accessories.

Join us for an evening seminar on 25 May at the Queen City Yacht Club, 1830 to 2100. \$5 per person fee. Pre-register with Nadeane Rutledge at rutledges@aol.com or 206-789-2834. You may bring a brown bag dinner. ❖

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Auction! April 5, 2006

Our next event is fast approaching and the excitement is building. The evening will include a spaghetti dinner with wine, two silent auctions and a live auction with Frank Dvorak as our MC. This year's donations have something for everyone. Look down the partial list below and determine what you might want to take away with you that night.

- Ben Bridge Jewelers – a ladies gold Seiko watch
- Dunato's – a haul out
- Second Wave – stainless steel barbecue, refurbished
- Rosario's – 4 nights moorage
- Paul Carraco & Associates – 4 trivets, 1 peppermill, and a wood cutting board
- Captain's Nautical - \$40.00 gift certificate
- Hilstad & Associates – a model boat
- Vyve – Haircut & Color; basket of products
- Massage Envy – a one hour massage
- Deer Harbor, Brownsville, Roche Harbor – moorage
- Harbor Marine – a globe bar
- Bally Family Fitness – a 2 month membership
- Morgan Stanley – tote bag with towel plus an analysis of a person's portfolio
- Marine Sanitation – a case of toilet paper
- QFC, Safeway – gift baskets
- Richard – a one burner butane stove top
- Boater's World – soda maker
- Lakeside Gravel – gravel
- Macklin – two director chairs; crystal candlesticks; framed artwork
- Lang – weekend on the *Silhouette*
- Brown – 2 bikes; bike helmets; sweatshirts
- Green – 2 new color HP printers; 1 week at his shared condo
- Woodmark Hotel - one night accommodations
- Fricke & Associates – luggage; American flag; storage containers
- Bellevue Golf Course – ½ hour lesson and a coupon for 6 large buckets of balls
- Ocean Alexander – haul out and cleaning for a boat up to 65'
- McCormick & Schmidts - \$50.00 gift certificate

Welcome, New Members

Lt Lonnie Butler, AP – Membership Chair

The Bellevue Sail and Power Squadron welcomes the following new members. Please take some time to introduce yourself to them and help get our new friends firmly and actively integrated into the squadron.

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Who's Who 2006

The next issue of *Who's Who*, the squadron roster, is being prepared for distribution in June. Please check your listing in the current version for accuracy and send any changes to Lt Robert J. Miller, AP, at bobmi@earthlink.net.

Of particular concern are updates to phone numbers, e-mail address, and boat name, type, length, and home port. **Changes received after 15 May 2006 will not be included.**

Who's Who Updates

Lt. Allen R. Cole, AP – Secretary

Please make these updates to *Who's Who 2005*. Send changes of mailing address, telephone numbers, e-mail address, and boat information to allen.cole@comcast.net. The National database will be updated as well as the squadron's mailing list. Remember, because of our non-profit mailing rate, **BELLVIEWS** is not forward by the US Postal Service, so do send in your address changes and not miss a valuable copy.

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The Very First Ever Joint D16/Sea Scouts Rendezvous

D/Lt Raye Newmen, AP, Sea Scout Liaison

Well, it's finally going to happen... a real, joint, sanctioned, and District-sponsored event with the Chief Seattle Council Sea Scouts. Set aside Saturday, May 20th, for a day of great fun and lots of opportunities to expand our safety at sea knowledge and skills. Generously hosted by the Seattle Maritime Academy in Ballard, this National Safe Boating Week rendezvous is going to be fantastic! Come by car or by boat; you can raft up to the Sea Scout and Academy ships for the day.



There will be demonstrations of ways to quickly patch hull breaches (darned dead heads!) using the U.S. Coast Guard damage control simulator; techniques for properly fighting a fuel fire (using a real, raging fuel fire!); and, procedures for crew overboard retrieval and hypothermia treatment (volunteers requested!). After attending short briefings on each safety topic, we can choose to simply observe the experts actually doing it the right way, delight in watching the scouts do the activities in competition (the Sea Scout Survival Suit Races should really be a hoot!), or jump in and try the exercises ourselves.

For the more timid among us, there will be gentler hands-on activities that should be fun ways to test our skills with knot tying, line throwing, and ring tossing. First mates can sign up for a Skipper Saver Class taught by our very own SEO, Lt/C Dave Green, AP, using Lt Mike Heinrich's amazing, moving, one-hundred pound boat maneuvering simulator!

We will join the scouts and their parents (great potential new members!) for a potluck lunch, and have an opportunity to visit two interesting Sea Scout Ships, the *Argo* (often rumored to be a thinly disguised pirate vessel), and the mighty 65-foot *Propeller*. Seattle Maritime Academy training ships will also be available for tours. If you brought your boat, you can get expert guidance tailored to your vessel, such as the likely effectiveness of your MOB rig, and the adequacy of your bilge pump capacity.

At the end of a long and exciting day, those who attended all of the safety activities, or completed the Skipper Savor class, will be acknowledged and presented with an award (suitable for framing) by D/C Pete Betlem, SN, Sea Scout Commodore Thomas Fawthrop, King County Sheriff Sue Rahr, and RDML Rick Houck, Commander of the 13th Coast Guard District. That's a lot of luminaries!

This first Joint Sea Scout Rendezvous is a very special opportunity for us all. Since this event is open to those 14 years or older (even very, very much older, so I can go!), plan on joining us and bringing along your teens. You know, those very same people you couldn't drag to one of our Dinner Meetings! Our squadron has had a major role in making this joint event a reality. So let's join in, make it a success, and have a great time! ❖



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Education Department Bulletins

Lt/C David J. Greene, AP

Students Wanted

Last chance to sign up for Spring Electives. We will be offering the following Elective Courses: (Registration first night of class)

Cruise Planning	starting 18 April at 1900
Instructor Development	starting 20 April at 1900

Of course, all classes are dependent upon adequate signups, because it is large investment of time for an instructor to teach a class. So let's populate the classes and make them worthwhile. And remember, **web site registration** more than 30 days before the class starts gets you a course discount. All classes to be held at Bellevue High School. Register at: <http://www.bellevuepowersquadron.org/MemberCourseSchedule.htm>

New USPS One-Day Seminars

We are also going to be offering seminars as we find instructors to teach them. USPS National is fully behind this new thrust and it sounds very exciting. We will probably try to begin them in the Fall. These courses will be taught for members and for non-members, so we have another tool to bring in new members.

The seminars include these topics: VHS and GMDSS; On-Board Weather; How to Use a Chart; Boat Handling; Knots, Bends, and Hitches; GPS & Chartplotter.

GPS Seminar

Assistant National Education Officer, R/C Bob Sweet, SN, will be hosted by BSPS when he attends the D-16 Education Seminar on 13 May 2006. In addition the D-16 Seminar (being hosted by Bellevue), other events are still being scheduled. One possibility is a GPS Seminar which has taught several dozen times on the East Coast) For more information, please check the squadron website or e-mail Dave Greene at: djgreene99@aol.com.

Skipper Saver Course

SKIPPER SAVER, a short class for **First Mates** has been re-written and will be available at Bellevue High School with registration and the first class session on 9 May at 1900. This promises to be an exciting class, with new teaching aids, and simplified instruction on VHF, Piloting, Weighing Anchor, Decision Making in Emergencies, Docking, Fire Extinguishers, and First Aid/CPR.

A **first** will be the use of a "boat simulator" for First Mates in order to get a feel for throttles, transmissions, and VHF use. Once the class sessions are completed, a practice session on your boat with an observer will be held so you can demonstrate your new found skills. Watch for announcements and registration information on our web site at: <http://www.bellevuepowersquadron.org/MemberCourseSchedule.htm>.

Cruising Log – Doing “The Ditch”

Ray Huggins, N, *S/V Boadicea*

The Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), aka “The Big Ditch,” is a navigable route of protected water going south from Boston to Florida, and then along the Gulf Coast to the Mexican border via interconnected canals, creeks, rivers, bays and sounds. My wife Eileen and I have recently traveled along the ICW from Fort Lauderdale, Florida to Cape May in New Jersey and Eileen has written a narrative about our experiences which has been published in *The Pilot*, the monthly newsletter of the Seattle Sail and Power Squadron. The purpose of this article is to describe the practicality of “Doing the Ditch” in a sailboat with a 6.5 foot draft. In theory, there should be no problem as the controlling depth is supposed to be 12 feet. However, after years of funding cutbacks, shoaling and silting has occurred so a 12 foot depth is no longer a given. From what we hear some people have enjoyed it while for others it has been a nightmare.

To put things in perspective, out of the 1300 miles from Fort Lauderdale to Cape May NJ, more than 99% of the time we had no problems after we learnt how to stay in the center of the channel. This required continuous concentration following the channel markers and watching the depth meter at the same time. In wide rivers and sounds where the channel was marked by alternate red/green markers half a mile apart, we frequently strayed out of the channel. This was usually indicated by the depth suddenly decreasing causing momentary panic especially as it was not always obvious whether we were on the left or right hand side of the channel. However, the error of the electronic charts was usually much smaller than the channel width so a quick look at the laptop usually indicated which way to go to avoid going aground.



Osprey Nest on Channel Marker

Nevertheless, we did go aground several times a day at first. We had foreseen this and purchased the unlimited BoatUS towing insurance in Fort Lauderdale. We never had to call BoatUS because a) we always went aground in soft sand or silt, b) being a sailboat with a fin keel, the keel easily plowed through soft sand and also protected the propeller and rudder, and c) we have a three-bladed MaxProp which easily dragged us off in reverse. We felt sorry for power boats that went aground, even though their draft was two feet or less. They frequently damaged their propeller(s) and shaft(s) necessitating a tow to the nearest marina with a Travel Lift to have their running gear inspected for damage and repairs performed if needed. Our boat was recently hauled for an insurance survey and there was no apparent damage to the keel except for the lack of bottom paint on the lowest four inches.



ICW in Rural Georgia

How did we fare during the 1% of the time when shoaling was a problem? Almost all the shoaling we encountered was documented in cruising guides, particularly Skipper Bob's book on *Anchorage Along the Intracoastal Waterway*, or which we were warned about by other cruisers. When approaching the shoal, we slowed down to two knots or less and felt our way through using the depth meter or sometimes gently going aground. Most times we were successful in finding a path over the shoal, but on the two occasions when this didn't work, we just waited for an hour or so until the rising tide raised the water level sufficiently for us to pass. We also tried to time it so that when we were in a shoal area, it was more than three hours either side of low tide. However, Murphy had to stick his oar in here and it often happened that if we timed our departure to pass a particular shoal when the tide was high, we would encounter another shoal when the tide was low. The other time when shoaling was a problem was when anchoring. You can anchor anywhere out of the channel, but once out of the channel, the depth always seemed to quickly decrease to five feet or less particularly in sheltered creeks or rivers and it was often hard to find areas of at least seven feet.



Boadicea Entering New York Harbor

Conditions also varied from state to state. In Florida, south of Jupiter Inlet, the depth was at least 12 feet. No problems here. Going north, we had to negotiate the Lucie Inlet at high tide and encountered bad shoaling in the vicinity of both Smyrna Beach and Palm Valley. Otherwise the depth varied between 10 and 14 feet. In Georgia, areas of shoaling were more frequent and most of the time, we only traveled three hours either side of high tide. In South Carolina, we went outside into the Atlantic between Charleston and Beaufort for 230

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 3)

beaten to death with a ream of paper as you sit hammering away at your keyboard. Your murderer(s) will be acquitted. Another thing; don't copy everybody in the district on the two emails you are allowed.

Sometimes Nobody But You Cares

If the issue you are worked up about seems to generate endless correspondence, but people just don't get how important it is and nothing ever happens, consider letting it go, to run, free, free as the wind...

Remember also that generating ideas, especially grandiose, complicated schemes, is really cool and makes you lots of friends, but if you want something to happen, you personally will have to do the work. No one else wants to.

Careful With the Written Word

There is a group of people who don't get that all emails are not meant to be shared with many friends, acquaintances and random bystanders. They also don't get that second hand emails should be cleansed of anything smacking of criticism of others before being forwarded to those being criticized. This lack of foresight can lead to troubling consequences which can take the form of long angry conversations.

Unfortunately, the happy-go-lucky forwarders have not yet been forcibly tattooed with "Do Not Trust Me" on their foreheads, so it is up to you to be careful. Limit the critical remarks to telephone conversations, and you can always blame alien interference with your cell phone if you are confronted later by an injured second party.

Life Is Not Always Fair

Nope, and you will not always get credit for your wonderful idea, people will not always perceive you as the person you know you are, and your "POO" pin or merit mark may have gotten lost in the mail. It's not personal; it's just life, probably getting even with you for all those emails.

This Is Supposed to Be FUN

Remember, we are enjoying a hobby and friendship, and the advantages of self education and relishing the joy of service to our own special community. We are not trying to get more pay, or a better office closer to the water cooler or anything serious like that. Fun, folks, that's what we're after here.

One final nag: go to the auction! Remember our squadron motto: If you give them wine with dinner, they will come! Prove us right, and hey, you don't have to buy anything, just have a glass of wine, some lovely pasta and enjoy yourselves. (Hee, hee.) ❖

Annual Fundraiser and Pasta Feed

05 April 2006

We need your support. See page 07.

Boating Safety—Fish Bladders and Rescue 21

Lt Bob Evans, P, Boating Safety Officer

Have you ever written about something of which you have no first hand knowledge? The first time I authored an article on fish swim bladders, I had dissected four hundred and thirty three fish with swim bladders (plus or minus two). No a swim bladder is not where a fish stores its urine while swimming around waiting to go pee-pee. They use the bladder to talk with other fish and to maintain neutral buoyancy. No kidding. So what does this have to do with boating safety? Really nothing unless you want to try to hold a dialog with a fish after falling overboard. However, it does have to do with me trying to write an article about all the new bells and whistles on VHF radios today. Mine is a vintage 1999 model good for calling the wharfinger for a slip or chatting with fellow boaters about where to tie up for the night.

So hear goes. No pride of authorship. Any corrections or clarifications will be noted next month. (*Editor's Note: See the excellent article by our Radio Technical Officer, Lt Gary Mohr, SN, on page 17 for more details.*) We have all heard of Digital Select Calling by this time, I hope. This was the extent of my knowledge until I started reading about the Coast Guard's new system called Rescue 21. This led me into reading more about DSC/VHF. DSC is simply a tone system that operates on VHF channel 70. You can't talk on it as it sounds like a dial tone (Why do they call it a dial tone when dial phones went out about 20 years ago?) and transmits an automatic MayDay when coupled to your GPS. This little black box then tells the Coast Guard your latitude and longitude. However; you need to register this little puppy and get a Maritime Mobile Service Identity or MMSI. The MMSI enters all of your boat data into the Coast Guard's computer system. Get your MMSI by logging onto www.boatus.com.

So what is new in the DSC/VHF world? How about the Coast Guard's Rescue 21 system that was just inaugurated this past December? It has only a little to do with a rapid rescue if you are over 21 and fall over board without your PFD after sipping too much wine or sprits. It works for all rescue needs. It is like a marine 911 system. Push the little red button on your DSC/VHF and the Coast Guard springs into action on the double. Rescue 21 plots the precise position and bearing to the vessel in distress, which is shown as an icon on the Coast Guards computer screen in a fraction of a second. The Coast Guard now has the exact position, latitude, longitude and data on the vessel's MMSI. If you have just a plain old VHF like me, your MayDay call will be automatically triangulated by the antennas receiving your signal. Not a good idea to try this out at the dock. Two stations on the East coast went operational December 20, 2005.

Now back to reports from my spy network. Who was the squadron member that ran out of gas in Puget Sound and the first words out of a fellow squadron member's mouth coming to the rescue were "GET THAT BURGEE DOWN!". Hint, it was not Sid Ruben's friend on *Silver Spoon* coming to the Brownsville rendezvous this past summer. ❖

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Tech Tips–Rescue 21 Update

Lt Gary Mohr, SN, Radio Technical Officer

A recent article titled “Rescue 21 Where Are You?” that appeared in the January 2006 issue of **BoatU.S.** may not have contained correct information. The article indicated that Seattle and Port Angeles DSC capability would be brought online in 2006. I contacted a representative of the District 13 Coast Guard to get a confirmation and, perhaps, an activation date.

The contact response was as follows:

“I have checked with my sources. No one can confirm for sure a 2006 date. There are two main issues: 1) There have been problems securing high sites to put up the necessary antenna systems. Many of these sites are on Park and Forest Service Land. Securing the necessary permits and preparing the EIS has taken more time than planned for. 2) A new Sector Seattle building is under construction and will not be finished until July or Aug 2006. This will include a new Command/Communications center where DSC would be received and analyzed. So given those reasons I suspect we will not see it available until 2007 according to best guess.”

In addition I mined some information from various internet sites about continuing DSC implementation problems that have occurred at the Atlantic City/Eastern Shores test area which include:

- The lack of follow-up voice comms after transmission of a DSC call, particularly, a distress call
- Unnecessary and frequent alarms
- Distress alerts without accurate location information
- Distress alerts with unregistered MMSI identification
- Limited use of DSC for routine communications
- Inconsistent and illogical software menu defaults
- Alarms disrupting ongoing radio communications

The bottom line appears to be that an accurate implementation date is difficult to nail down and there could be some continuing problems once the system is activated. As a significant representative of the boating community we should be prepared to do the best we can at reducing problems we have some control over once the system is activated:

- Don't hit the “Red Button” unless necessary
- Connect your GPS to the DSC capable VHF if possible
- Get an MMSI number, preferably the Federal one if you plan on entering Canada, and program it into the radio
- Practice using the DSC capability by making routine contacts – this can be done prior to system activation

I will continue to follow the progress of this very important USCG program. ❖

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miles because we estimated it would take us at least 10 days on the ICW traveling only three hours either side of high tide, and we wanted to make up some lost time. As a sideline, we saw a most spectacular thunderstorm at 0200 hours off the Frying Pan Shoals. Fortunately we were about 10 miles away. We had no problems in North Carolina north of Beaufort except that in the Alligator River, we couldn't go into one marina because of shoaling in the approach channel. In both North and South Carolina, there were many ranges which made it easy to stay in the channel. In Virginia, it was notable that immediately after crossing the North Carolina - Virginia boarder, the depth increased from 10 feet to 14 feet. The Chesapeake Bay and Delaware River/Bay, while being only 20 to 50 feet deep on average have well maintained channels. No problems here. Finally, we will be traveling off the New Jersey shore as the controlling depth in the ICW is reputed to be 3 to 4 feet and there is a fixed bridge with a 25 feet clearance.

This has been a summary of the practical details of traveling along the ICW from Florida to New York City in a 6.5 foot draft sailboat. Would we do it again? Yes, but only in a boat with a draft of five feet or less so that we could get into some of the more interesting anchorages. ❖



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Dear Commander,

It always gives me great pleasure to find the Bellviews in our P.O. box and be able to read your well written articles. The Squadron is lucky to have had you as a Commander for two terms. Soon you will be replaced and I am sure that Sally will also do a good job. Please give her my congratulations for being nominated as the next Commander.

I would like to remain a member and will mail my dues to Dawn Miller with a little extra for postage to Chile.

We had the pleasure of having the visit of Maxine Cross and a friend of hers. They stayed for dinner after Doreen took them on a tour. I had just been operated on my right knee and could not join them on the tour.

Last month we went to see the start of a 200 mile international sailboat race that started in Puerto Montt went south to Chiloe and back. We took several pictures of the 62 boats participating. I wrote a short article about it which I plan to send to The Ensign.

Is there a chance that you and Bob might come to visit us? We hope that all is well with you and the Prince of Frowns. We miss you and the rest of the members.

Please say hello to everybody in our name.

Pete and Doreen Schuitemaker
(pdschuit@yahoo.com)

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Signals From the Editor

Lt Robert J. Miller, AP

Decisions, decision, decisions. Some people say life is just a series of decisions and our future is determined at each decision point. I, for one, tend to feel that we have to be responsible for our decisions (or, worse, the lack of one). But, "Enough!" I shouted a couple of weeks ago. "Enough of the decisions, let us rest for a while!"

The Commander and I were in sunny, but chilly, Florida meeting with the design team for the forthcoming new boat, a.k.a. Project LS3. Even though the new boat doesn't get splashed until March 2007, we had been informed that we needed to decide upon many of the construction details a full year in advance. So, here we are visiting Ft Lauderdale and Miami during the week of the Miami International Boat Show to meet with the design team in Dania Beach, FL.

In a period of three hours, we had coffee, were introduced to the owner of the company (Gary) and the new office assistant (?), met with the project manager (Julliane), the interior designer (Linda), and the sales representative (Ray), selected the hull color (cream), were led through a discussion of boot strip colors (yes, there are four separate colors in the boot stripe, I think), chose the cabinet front pattern (raised front) and the finish of the teak cabinetry (satin), discussed the position of the hard top (move it back a foot), walked through several pages of layouts of the three decks, reviewed the pros and cons of kitchen-sized refrigerator/freezers compared to under the counter drawer units (six drawers), had some more coffee (Starbucks), decided to have an open stairway to the flybridge and a counter top beneath it (granite topped), reviewed placement of appliances in the galley (my job, the Commander only works the microwave for popcorn), decided on how many pilot chairs on the flybridge and pilothouse (two and one, maybe), and visited the toilet a couple of times (too much coffee).

How many decisions were made in this star burst of energy? I lost track, but the project manager and the interior designer were keeping copious notes. A lull in the non-stop discussions resulted in the Commander and me being hustled into a car by the interior designer and racing into Ft Lauderdale to a mystical place called "Dacota" that had been mentioned all morning. DCOTA or Design Center of The Americas turned out to be a three building complex of four story buildings full of "trade only" shops used by decorators and builders. We were ushered into the complex and the two of us were subjected to another three hours of decisions. Granite or marble for the galley counter top (the designer wanted marble but the shop's expert said granite was better), what color of granite to use (goldish with grey), what color of marble for the heads (whitish with gold), what colors and fabrics for each of the staterooms (I can't remember), and on and on and on. My mind was dull and I must have passed out. No more decisions!!

The deadline for the May issue is 7 April 2006.

Calm seas and fair winds,
Bob Miller ❖

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