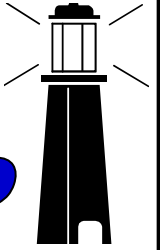




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CHANNEL MARKER



VOLUME L ISSUE 6

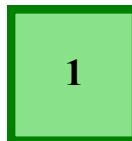
November 2008

RIVERGATE PARK PICNIC



P/C Don Widmayer, AP and P/Lt/C Jann Widmayer, AP at the picnic on 25 October.

Additional photos on Page 10.



Official Publication of the
Port St. Lucie Power Squadron®
a unit of United States Power Squadrons®
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If so, please contact the editor before the next

**CHANNEL MARKER DEADLINE ON
20 November 2008**

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The CHANNEL MARKER is published six times annually by the Port St. Lucie Power Squadron, PO Box 7484, Port St. Lucie, FL 34985; a unit of the United States Power Squadrons Sail and Power Boating. Submissions may be sent to the editor. All articles appearing in this paper are assumed to represent the opinion of the author and are not to be considered as reflecting the policy of USPS® or the Port St. Lucie Squadron unless so designated.

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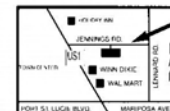
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25
October
2008

Rivergate Park



Photos by
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COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Mark Rosen



It was an interesting summer. The pig roast and clam bake were both a lot of fun. The turn out wasn't as large as we had hoped but all that attended had a great time. For a little while I felt sorry for the pig, but he tasted so good. The summer rendezvous in the Keys was great. The nominating committee has been working very hard to present a great slate for the next bridge. I encourage all of you to get involved. This is your power squadron. We need fresh people to move into some of the active rolls. We will be planning the activities for next year at the bridge meetings. Every one is welcome to attend. They are held at Ann Boeckler's home, call her to let her know if you plan on attending. We are planning a fantastic event for a combination change of watch and 50th anniversary celebration. The holiday party in December should also be a lot of fun. For those I don't see between now and Thanksgiving I wish you all well and a happy holiday!

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Can you believe it? The Squadron will be 50 years old in 2009. Plans are going forward to celebrate the anniversary in conjunction with the change of watch in February. We plan on having a private dinner cruise aboard The Island Princess based in Stuart at the Finest Kind marina. A gala celebration is being planned. Please reserve Friday, 13 February 2009 and don't miss the fun of good food and entertainment.

50th Anniversary Committee

Education News By Lt/C Al Bruhin, SN

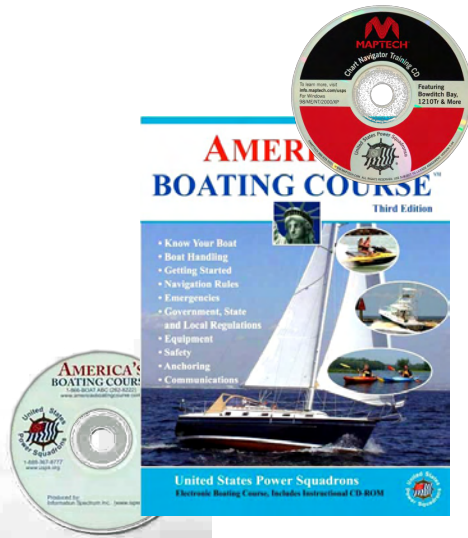
We had a class in September with only six students. It was taught by P/C Ken Mazur, P/C Don Widmayer and myself. The marks were quite good with two students receiving 100% and the lowest mark was 87. Our next class is scheduled for 22/23 November 2008.

By the time this is published the Seamanship course, taught by P/C Don Widmayer, AP, will be under way. So far we have six students. This will be the first Seamanship class where sanctioned "on the water" activities will be part of the course material. Don has put together an excellent plan for hands on material on his boat. This has been made possible by the new insurance that USPS has obtained covering these types of educational activities.

When the Seamanship class is complete we will start a Piloting course for those students interested in continuing studying.

The new public boating course will be called "America's Boating Course 3rd Edition". The books will be available for classes starting in January but I think we will still have a number of the existing "The Squadron Boating Course" books to use up before we can make the transition.

Please remember there are elective courses that are interesting and informative that can be made available for small classes or for self study during the summer months. Let me know if you are interested. If you are interested in any of the core courses let me know and I will see if I can find one being presented nearby or, if there is enough interest we will run one in our Squadron.



November 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 1100 Air Show Raft Up
9	10	11	12 1900 Exec Com Meeting	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 Boating Course
23 Boating Course	24	25	26 1900 Gen Mtg & Dinner	27 Thanksgiving 	28	29
30						

December 2008

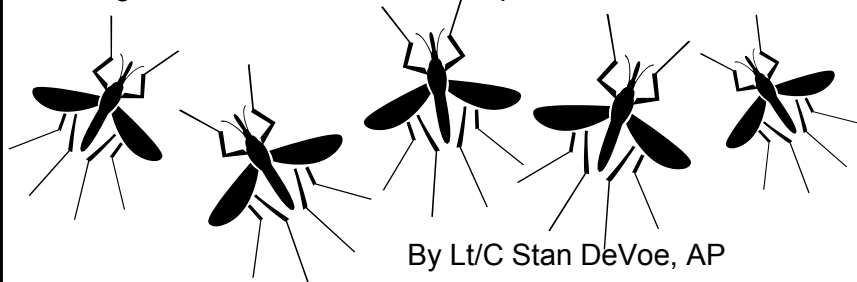
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Christmas Boat Parade
7	8	9	10 1900 Exec Com Meeting	11	12	13 Christmas Party
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 	26	27
28	29	30	31			

THE BLIND MOSQUITO MASSACRE (Continued from Page 7)

After dark on the last night at the Springs, mosquitoes started pouring into the boat through a little opening in one of the side screens, probably attracted by the lights in the boat. These mosquitoes were not biting. (Later we were told that they were called blind mosquitoes and indeed did not bite.) We plugged the hole in the screen, and started smashing the mosquitoes with magazines on the ceiling and everywhere they gathered. It was a real mosquito massacre! There must have been at least a thousand in the cabin. After an hour of smashing, we had killed all we could find. The cabin was a mess with squashed mosquitoes everywhere. The next morning we scrubbed the cabin ceiling and cleaned the boat of all the carcasses before departing on the return trip to the marina.

The return trip to the rental marina was very pleasant. There were many floating plants in the water, frequently obscuring the real channel. Occasionally the rafts of plants were so numerous it was difficult to differentiate the channel from dead end arms of water. A good chart would have been very helpful! All four of us took turns at the helm---Helen, Alice, and Bob had little trouble getting the feel of steering and avoiding "S" turns, although Helen and Alice were best! The rental marina was very apologetic about the radio and battery problems. They offered and we accepted a refund of the money spent on gas for the cruise!

Are there any lessons to be learned from this trip? Yes!! The Captain should thoroughly check out his boat before leaving the marina. Do not accept the word of the dockmen. We wonder why our radio checked OK in the marina but failed on the river. Probably it was a bad or loose connection with the antenna. Be certain that everything is in good working order. Bring good charts with you. As long time cruisers we know how to prepare for trips. However on this trip we were a little too complacent about this "simple little river cruise." Above all use the knowledge learned from our Power Squadron courses.



By Lt/C Stan DeVoe, AP

THE BLIND MOSQUITO MASSACRE ON THE ST. JOHNS

By Lt/C Stan DeVoe, Port St. Lucie Power Squadron

The four long time friends were excited about their upcoming vacation. A boat cruise on the St. Johns River in Florida had been planned for months. Captain Stan and 1st Mate Helen were the experienced boaters in the group. "There's nothing to be concerned about---we've been boating for over 40 years," said the Captain. Oh, did those words come back to haunt him!

It was mid October---the hot days of summer were gone--- the weather perfect for a cruise. We met our friends Bob and Alice at their home in St. Augustine, drove south to Deland, and headed southwest to reach the marina on the St. Johns River where we had chartered a houseboat. It looked huge at first glance, a 53 foot pontoon boat with the cabin extending almost the entire length of the boat. The engine was only a 110 HP outboard! We were told that the maximum speed at full throttle was about 8 knots. To save gas we were cautioned to use about three quarter throttle to move at about 7 knots. The boat had the required VHF radio, a cell phone, and a generator supplied the power for the lights, air conditioning, refrigerator, and cooking stove. The dockman explained the use of the appliances. We did a radio check. Stan was a little uneasy that the only chart supplied by the marina was rudimentary. "This is all you'll need on the river", said the dockman.

The dockman released the lines, and confidently we backed out of the slip. Although our plans were to travel north on the St. Johns, the boat immediately turned south as the bow cleared the slip. The high cabin on the boat acted as a sail and the northerly winds turned the boat southward. This was an embarrassing way to start, especially in front of everyone at the marina! With difficulty we made a 180 degree turn in the narrow river and headed north. The dockman had warned us that at first we would make a lot of "S" turns with the boat until we learned to control the steering. That was so true! Excessive steering was the problem but we soon had the zig zag under control.

(Continued on Page 6.)

THE BLIND MOSQUITO MASSACRE (Continued from Page 5)

One mile north of the marina a low drawbridge crossed the river. We called the bridge tender on the VHF radio requesting a bridge opening--- no response. Called again---no response. Called a third time---no response. On our radio we heard another boat that was astern of us calling the bridge tender...finally we realized that our radio was receiving but not transmitting. The bridge tender thought that he was talking to us since we were the closest to the bridge. The bridge tender said that as soon as the two boats were close together, he would open the bridge. Visibility astern was very poor in the houseboat, so Stan asked Bob how far astern was the other boat. Bob said about 50 feet. (Later Alice said that the other boat was actually about 100 yards back.) Thinking that the two boats were close together we closed slowly on the bridge---the bridge was not opening! 1st Mate Helen yelled, "We're going to hit the bridge". Captain Stan put the engine in full reverse. The boat stopped very close to the bridge and slowly backed away to port, as outboard engines tend to do. There were piles and a marina astern to port. Helen warned, "We're backing into a marina". Stan put the engine in forward, turned the wheel maximum to the starboard, barely missed a piling. Now the boat was headed back south again. We made another 180 degree turn to get behind the other boat that was proceeding toward the bridge. The bridge opened and both boats passed through. Then we heard the bridge tender saying into his radio, "What the h--- were you doing?" Captain Stan was not happy! We came extremely close to hitting the bridge that would have caused serious damage to the boat. This was not a pleasant way to start a cruise.

We attempted to call the rental marina on the cell phone supplied with the boat. The cell phone battery was dead! Fortunately Alice had brought her cell phone on the cruise. We explained to the rental agent about the problems with the radio. He said that he would send a man in a fast chase boat to fix the radio. He told us where to anchor to await the chase boat. It was a quiet little cove off the main part of the river, with lily pads surrounding the cove. Bob dropped the anchor as we entered the cove, but before the anchor could set, the wind pushed the boat into the lily pads. The boat came to a halt half way into the lily pads. The repairman arrived in the chase boat, replaced the radio antenna, and the radio problem was solved. It was very embarrassing to ask the chase boat to tow us out of the lily pads. (Cont. next page)

Finally Happy Hour arrived...we needed it after the drawbridge and lily pad incidents! Jokingly we demoted Bob to deckhand for his bad distance estimate between boats at the drawbridge and then his anchoring technique. The Captain didn't get away "Scot free"---he received a "roasting" for boat handling at the bridge. Finally we were able to laugh at the entire episode. Happy Hour did help soothe the frayed nerves. We stayed overnight in the cove, and the next day proceeded north toward Lake George, a very wide opening in the river---miles wide. The little chart supplied by the marina showed a compass bearing to a buoy on the west side of Lake George. It marked the entrance to Silver Glen Springs Park. We were about a mile from the west shore, headed for this Park, when a small seaplane flew close overhead and landed on the water near the shore. Then the plane disappeared! We headed directly to where the plane disappeared, and found the buoy that marked the entrance. It was a little stream not much wider than our boat with a depth of 3 feet. We followed the stream that finally opened into a wide cove. There was the seaplane, anchored at the end of the cove with a few other boats.

The cove had a natural spring from which huge amounts of water gushed upward. It was almost like a jet under the water pushing the water to the surface with great velocity. The water was crystal clear. We anchored the boat, took a swim, and decided to explore the spring. The water depth in the cove was about 3-4 feet and the water temperature a cool 72 degrees. We walked in the water towards the spring, but about 20 feet from the spring the force of the gushing water was so great that we could not move any closer! There were large fish circling around the spring but no alligators.

We only ran the generator during the day. We never ran the generator overnight for fear that carbon monoxide would get into the cabin while we slept. Despite keeping the generator running the recommended number of hours to keep the batteries charged, one of the batteries was "dead" in the morning. It was the one to start the generator. Stan climbed down into the engine compartment, switched the leads from the generator to the engine battery, and started the generator to charge both batteries. Because of the battery problem, we decided to stay at the Springs instead of heading farther north on the St. Johns River. It was a most fortunate decision because another battery was "dead" the next morning, solved the same way by switching leads. (Continued on Page 8.)