

# “FILES AND PROFILES” FROM THE DISTRICT

“The Dixie District: District 17 May 2006 Issue

## COMMANDER’S COMMENTS

Fellow members of District 17,



One area that will not take much effort for members in our district is that of social activities among our squadrons. We have never been known for lacking in social or contact skills. However, this year we will be focusing on activities between D17 and D26. Last year, District 26

named a Liaison for District 17 and this year we added a Liaison for D26 to the Commander’s Committee.

Many of our members living along the eastern edge of our district concentrate their boating activities along the Atlantic Coast. Many have become slip neighbors with members of D26 and developed close friendships. This new committee will receive information from D26 and distribute it to interested D17 members. Like wise information from D17 squadrons can be transmitted to this D17 Committee for dissemination to interested parties in D26. We would also like to establish this same pipe line of information to D15 along the Gulf Coast. Only good, positive results can come from this sharing of information and ideas.

Thanks go out to Chuck Stone of the Memphis Squadron for attending a meeting of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Memphis, TN on behalf of USPS. His report to R/C Bill Husted, Chair of the Government and Partners Relations Committee was well received.

Appreciation was also extended to Chuck by V/C Creighton Maynard, our National Executive Officer. This is a good example of District/Partner relations building in action.

Since our District Fall Conference held in Huntsville, another possibility has emerged. P/C of the Vulcan Squadron Allan Folts, who is also a

member of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Council, has referred us to the Executive Director of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Tourism Association. I am planning to attend their meeting this fall to develop possible areas of joint activities and mutual benefit for all of us that use the Tennessee, Tombigbee and tributaries.

My notes to you for the June issue of “Files and Profiles” will contain several items that have emerged from the USPS Spring Operating Committee. There are many changes to the good for USPS, but they require approval at the Fall Governing Board in New York City. I will be asking you to let your desires be known to your squadron commander because he is a member of the Governing Board and must cast your vote. Our next meeting will be 03November2006 at the Alta Vista Conference Center and Hotel in Birmingham for our Fall Council and Conference where I hope to report the results of the voting.

Thank you again; I’ll see all of you in Birmingham!

Tom Carey, Commander

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## SAFETY COLUMN OF “A CLOSE CALL... AND LESSONS LEARNED”

*Reefpoint*, as with most marinas, has a rule against swimming in the marina. Knowing better and not much of a rule follower anyway, I rarely hesitated to jump in at *Reefpoint* or at other marinas when the heat got to me.

“Sans Souci”, along with three other boats had the occasion to stop at a friend’s dock in Lake Ontario (which is freshwater) last summer. Our friends have a great setup, with a floating dock and a 30A-shore power facility. We were last to arrive, so we rafted up to one of the other boats. The other boats had already hooked up to the 30A-shore power, but our friend offered to run an extension from a wall outlet in their boat house to our boat. Not wanting to run the generator, I accepted and made the connection. The “reverse polarity” light flashed briefly when I turned on the switch, but everything seemed to run OK so I ignored it. **Lesson Number 1 – Never ignore a reverse polarity warning!**

We were tied up in only four feet of exceptionally clear water, so early the next

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morning I decided it was a good opportunity to check the running gear and hull. I lowered the swim ladder and started down the steps. As soon as I touched the bottom, I felt a vague vibrating sensation in my arms. I had no idea what was causing it, but decided to get out of the water. . . . fast! I started to move up the ladder, but found that I could not move my arms – I was essentially paralyzed. I then realized that I was being electrocuted! I found I could at least yell, which of course I did. When Carol and the adjacent boaters came running out, I yelled to shut off the power. They were able to do that, but not for a few precious moments, which seemed like hours.

Fortunately, in the meantime I found that I could move my legs. I moved them up a rung or so, and was able to push myself away from the swim platform. I was a good twenty feet behind the boat before the sensation was gone.

The power turned off, I was able to return to the boat and although a little shaky, climb out of the water. We then examined the 60-year-old boathouse power, and found that the ground to the outlet was not connected, and that the polarity was in fact reversed. **Lesson Number 2 – always test a power source before trusting it with your life!**

The U. S. Power Squadron Marine Electronics course warns that it only take 20 milliamperes of electrical power across the chest to cause fibrillation and cardiac arrest. A 15-ampere house circuit delivers 750 times that power. Fortunately, this event happened in freshwater, which is a poor conductor of electricity, but in saltwater, the result would have been much different. That's not to say that you can't be killed in fresh water. The captain of the boat next to us is a retired paramedic, and told of the day that he was called to a freshwater dock in Illinois where two young brothers were electrocuted and died under similar circumstances. Unfortunately, there are plenty of ways that raw 110-volt power can be introduced to the water at a marina, from improper use of battery chargers, to defective dock and boat wiring. **Lesson Number 3 – Maybe that “No Swimming in the Marina” rule is a pretty good one.**

----- By Bob Kunath

Waukegan Sail and Power Squadron  
District 20

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## **IMPORTANT ALERT TO BOATERS: ATLANTA INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY**

The following is from the AIWA and is transferred from a message sent to the PSML (Power Squadron Mailing List) by Paul Soucy, Long Bay Squadron, District 26.

“I have just learned that shoaling conditions in Hells Gate, Georgia have become so dangerous that the U.S. Coast Guard will most likely be removing all aids to navigation in the area by the end of the month. Recent surveys indicate depths as low as 2 - 4 feet in some areas. The Coast Guard reports numerous groundings in the area and advises boaters that once markers are removed, navigation through Hells Gate will be at their own risk. .

The federal funding situation for waterway maintenance gets worse every year. The Georgia portion of the waterway has not received any funds to dredge for several years. As a result, there are currently 27 problem spots that the US Army Corps of Engineers is aware of. Hells Gate is the worst and will be the first to close. However, we can expect this to happen at other locations as well. The AIWA web site has the latest Corps surveys for each District along the AIWW. Also included is the list of 27 problem spots in the Georgia waterway.

The cost to return the Savannah District's portion to 12 foot depth will be \$19.2 million due to the cost to construct of upland disposal sites for the three reach; Creighton Narrows, Little Mud River, and Jekyll Creek. The cost to dredge all the problem areas, except Creighton Narrows, Little Mud River, and Jekyll Creek would be \$2.5 million. In the FY06 budget, the Corps only received funds to monitor the conditions of the project. They would require a least \$2.5 million to dredge the project.

But Georgia residents must rally behind this issue. Your elected representatives in Washington DC need to hear from you. The fastest way to reach them is by fax or email. Congress is working on the FY 07 Energy & Water Appropriations and we have a very short window to get the message to the committee. Please go the AIWA web site, working with Congress for information to help you send your letters. Be sure to include your name, address and telephone number. Also send your letters to Hon. David L. Hobson, OH (R-Chairman) and Hon. Peter J. Visclosky, IN (D - Ranking Member) Energy & Water Subcommittee.” \*\*\*

# MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBER INVOLVEMENT FROM THE MEMPHIS POINT OF VIEW!



(Front row L-R: Linda Wehrum, Janet Nuckolls, Marilyn Blackburn, Linda Wildman and Bill Wehrum)  
(Back row L-R: Andy Nuckolls, Becky Austin, Commander Maggie Poston, Jean Stone, Chuck Stone,  
Donnie Blackburn, Reese Austin, Gary Wildman and Nat Poston)

Ah, ladies and lasses, isn't this group a sight for sore eyes? And notice all the green they are wearin' for St. Paddy's Day! This fine looking bunch of characters represented the Memphis squadron at the Spring Conference in Huntsville last month. Fourteen members from Memphis traveled about 250 miles for the weekend. Why did they do it? Study their faces, they are having FUN! The weekend enhanced the USPS mission with education, business sessions and socializing 'round the clock.

Come to Birmingham for the Fall Conference and ask how they retain their membership! Mark your calendars now: 3-5 November 2006 in Birmingham at the Alta Vista Hotel atop Red Mountain. \* \* \*

## LAST HORIZON

We are saddened to hear that **Linda Wehrum** (in photo front row, L) passed away on Sunday, 07 May 2006 after a long illness.

Our hearts go out to Bill in this difficult time.

Cards may be addressed and sent to:

Bill Wehrum

5306 Park Avenue

Memphis, TN 38119-3506

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P/D/C Bobby George reports that the Rome Squadron said good bye today to Past Commander **Jack Townes**, a 45 year member with 43 Merit Marks. According to Bobby, P/C Townes was personally responsible for probably half the membership of Rome during those years.

**BOAT INSURANCE**  
**LIST OF TOP INSURANCE CLAIMS**  
**(Sent out by BoatUS, March 2006**

While you may never expect to file an insurance claim on your boat, knowing why and how damages occur can help you reduce your chances. The January 2006 issue of *Seaworthy*, the damage avoidance newsletter from BoatUS Marine Insurance, reviewed five years of its own claim files to find the most common causes for insurance claims, as well as insurance claim dollar amounts, were factored in to compile the list.

#9: Theft of equipment: Make time-consuming “work” for a thief, and they will likely go elsewhere. The theft of outdrives can be prevented by adding hefty locking nuts; the same goes for outboards and trailers. If they can be removed, expensive electronics should be stored under lock and key – and at home in winter. Well-lighted storage or marina facilities with security measures are the best deterrents.

#8: Theft of boat: When thieves steal boats, they often strip everything of value leaving only a shell. Ninety percent of the boats stolen were on trailers, so removing tires, installing a coupler lock and parking in a well lit, secure area helps.

#7: Lightning: Since there isn't anything you can do to prevent a lightning strike, the best measure to mitigate damage is to ensure your boat has a proper bonding system that will direct the strike to ground.



#6: Grounding: What you do after you've hit bottom – such as attempting to power through – often causes more damage than the initial impact. It's best to stop, carefully evaluate the situation, wait for the tide or call for help if you need a gentle pull. Also, knowing the exact depth beneath your depthsounder's transducer and its exact position relative to the bottom or your boat or running gear is very important.

#5: Collisions: Collisions with docks or pilings are common but collisions with other boats are more serious. Inattention, blind spots and too much speed most often is the culprit. Out on the water, misunderstandings of the rules of the road are most often cited, but know that it takes two skippers to be in one bad spot at the same time.

#4. Wind and weather: Sloppy weather happens everywhere. Minimizing windage, tying up securely, guarding against chafe and staying protected help reduce storm damage.

#3: Fire and explosion: The number one reason for boat fires is DC wiring faults, with the most common fault being chafed wires, usually as the result of poor support or insecure attachment. AC shorepower cord inlets are another prime area as wear and corrosion cause resistance, which creates a lot of heat. Corroded, overheated exhaust manifolds and fuel leaks bring up the bottom of the list.

#2: Sinking: Lesser fittings like hoses and clamps only last a few years and often fail long before the beefy seacock they are attached to. Outdrive bellows over five years old are on borrowed time and rainwater improperly drained into the bilge by clogged scuppers kills your battery and bilge pump.

#1: **Striking submerged objects:** Nationwide, striking a submerged object is the most common incident that leads to filing a claim. The amount of floating debris increases after major storms or extreme tides so be extra vigilant after these events. Unfortunately, striking an object sometimes leads to a sunken boat claim; check the bilge immediately after a strike and frequently the thereafter.