

North Star

Membership Publication by the
Vancouver Island North District
(a Unit of Canadian Power & Sail Squadrons)



Commander's Corner

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Another Training Season is upon us and I am sure most of you have started your Fall Boating Courses. I sincerely hope this will be a banner year for registrations in Boating and other courses.

Our year started off with a very successful Annual General Meeting and Change of Watch in June, and I would again like to thank Cowichan Squadron for hosting the event and for making it so enjoyable.

I want to thank all of you who put your names forward to serve, either on the District Bridge or a Squadron Bridge this year. Thanks also to those volunteering as Course Instructors and Proctors, without whom CPS would not exist. There are many other members who contribute their time with various Squadron events and to these folks, a hearty 'thank you' as well.

The CPS National Conference is being held this year in Vancouver, over a period of four days from October 25-28. Since this event is being held so close to home, I am hoping to see some familiar faces from VIND. If you are able to attend, even if only for a day, it will give you an insight into CPS as a National body and an idea of how the organization is managed. For information about this event, please go to the website at www.cps-ecp.ca/conf06/index.htm.

In closing, I wish all Squadrons a successful and enjoyable year and to encourage all officers to participate in the Officer Training Program, which will help to make their Squadron more successful.

Safe boating.

D/C Ray Orr.

cruise@jrsc.com

Editor's Update

Jeff Hale *AP*

Welcome to the first electronic issue of the North Star. We are improving the communications between the Squadrons by creating more issues throughout the year. As well, we have created a calendar of Squadron events under the 'Upcoming Events' header on our website at www.VIND.org.

Our efforts are only as good as the information we get from you. Contributions to the North Star should be sent to me, while details of your events should be sent as text within the body of the e-mail to our Webmaster, Rob Derksen, at Robert_Derksen@yahoo.com.

Jeff

Half-way to Christmas

Ron and I decided for our Anniversary that we would take in the Halfway to Christmas Cruise to Telegraph Harbour on Thetis Island. We charted the 65 mile run and broke it down into 3 legs. Deep Bay to French Creek, French Creek to Nanaimo, Nanaimo to Telegraph Harbour. We left at 0500 on June 25. We had fairly calm seas till outside Nanoose where the waters became disturbed, not knowing which way to go with the changing winds.



We arrived at Nanaimo by 0800 and proceeded to the PetroCan Barge to feed our 225 Suzuki. At that time we helped a lone sailor to tie up at the barge as the winds weren't co-operating for his entry. We also decided to take a walk around the harbour and go for breakfast, as we were waiting for slack tide at Dodds Narrows (0930). Two places were open at that time - the coffee shop on the harbourfront walkway and A&W across the Harbour Mall. It was a beautiful morning and all was going to schedule.

We traversed the Narrows with ease and continued on our way noting the perfect scenery, but also noticing the amount of loose lumber in the water. We arrived at Telegraph Harbour(1030) unscathed and found moorage for the night at Telegraph Harbour Marina. There were some CPS boaters that had arrived the previous night, and by late afternoon there were 25 of us.



The major part of the afternoon was spent decorating the boats and socializing, plus a Dinosaur Egg hunt that tested your navigating skills. Teams were formed and hand held compasses with a list of bearings and distance were used to find the Dinosaur eggs. They were all found and enjoyed on a hot afternoon.

Potluck supper on land in the hut with a BBQ

ready to go was on the menu for the evening. After our Christmas supper we had a visit from Santa and his Elves, and we found out who was naughty and nice. After singing a few Christmas Carols, the rest of the tourists started to eyeball this group in shock and wonder. The evening light dimmed and the boats were lit like it was December. The undertaking of judging of the boats was given to the shocked and awed bystanders who were finally getting into the spirit of

the event. Duane Partie rose to the top of the list after some hard competition.

In the morning we noticed that our stockings were full. We headed down the pier for coffee and muffins before we packed up for home. The winds and forecast were for gale force winds on the Strait, and in the harbour you could already feel it coming. Slack at Dodds on the flood was late afternoon. Sunday is a busy day, so we left after lunch. On the inside of the islands it was fairly calm, about 1 to 2 foot chop. The sightseers were picnicking on the top of the rocks on each side of Dodds as we went through. There was a rather large whirlpool at the bottom which tried to grab the transom as we went by. We powered out and made our way around Jack Point into a gale force situation as we headed for Nanaimo.

It was a short distance to go. but slow as the waves kept breaking over the bow. Listening to Channel 16 the CCG was busy, and on other stations there were reports of 37 ft boats with waves breaking over their windshields so we decided to fuel up and head for the Dingy Dock.

The white caps in the harbour subsided and we thought we would go down Newcastle channel to check out the other side. No sooner than we headed out, a

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Half-way to Christmas

call came thru on the VHF radio from Past District Cdr Barb Hoffstrom, inviting us to pull in at the Yacht club. We did, checked on the weather, had supper, then bid a fond adieu to our hosts.

We had a short window of opportunity to make it to French Creek between the next blow and sunset. Seas



were still a bit rough, but we made it to French Creek and enjoyed a beautiful sunset. We had our son pick us up and planned our last leg for the next day.

The winds blew all night and for the better part of the next day. At about 1600 while in my travels, I noticed that the water close to Vancouver Island was relatively calm. I went home and told Ron "Let's go!" He looked at the tree tops and said I was crazy, but when we got to the Harbour he had to agree that there was a stretch of calm close to shore.

We took off and it was clear sailing, yet we could see the dark band of the wind in the distance. We got closer to Chrome Island and it was weird to see a line - one side chop and the other flat, just from the shelter of the island.

Needless to say, we made it back no problem. But it could of been bad if we had been trying to beat the clock and pushing to get somewhere on time rather than putting safety first. Safety first, even at the dock - don't jump out in a hurry! Play it safe and take your time. It makes a much more enjoyable trip in the end.

Nancy De Gagne
Past Commander/
Port Captain, French Creek

Thunderstorm

Susanne and I had spent a lovely evening listening to the big band sounds of Just Us. As we returned home from Qualicum, there was still the odd puddle left over from the afternoon thunderstorm, and the horizon to the east lit up with the occasional lightning. We were a couple of blocks from the house when my Coast Guard pager began to beep for my attention. It was a code 3 "Mayday".

Susanne pulled into the garage and I grabbed the truck keys and hurried to French Creek. The 733 (Fast Response Boat) was gone and the Cape Cockburn was idling at the dock ready for departure. There had been two flare sightings off Northwest Bay, and the

FRB was already on the way. I grabbed my equipment bag and went below to dress for the search. It was a pleasant evening with a moderate breeze from the west, requiring only a jacket and PFD. We eased out into the strait and set a course for the north side of Mistaken Island. Radar was not picking up any targets, but we kept a keen watch for lights in the night that could come from a small vessel or a person in the water. From time to time we would sweep the area with our powerful searchlights. Comox Coast Guard radio was active, coordinating the search efforts. We only had a general direction to go by, and no idea of where along that bearing the flares had come from.

Thunderstorm

We continued down to the WG (Whisky Golf) area buoy, then back to the north side of the Ballenas Islands. Comox directed our FRB to break off the search and check out the report of a possible boat aground in Tribune Bay on Hornby Island. At the same time, we were advised that the Cormorant helicopter was being dispatched to our area to assist in the search. Our Captain suggested to the search centre that the Cormorant check out the grounding on the way down, and we would respond if warranted. They agreed, and the FRB broke off their shore search to rendezvous with us.

The weather was turning, and the lightning in the east was putting on quite a show. I had never been on the ocean in a thunderstorm, but had had several experiences with them on our lake in Quebec as a boy. They are not something to be trifled with! I went below to change into my survival suit, anticipating rain and cooler wind. By the time I returned to the aft deck the 733 was along side and secure.

The Cormorant advised that the situation in Tribune bay could be handled by others, so we were instructed to resume our search. There were only two crew on the three-man 733, so the question was asked if any of us Auxiliary had our wet gear on board. Then they spotted me already dressed, re-assigned me and I transferred my gear to the FRB. We set out to do a shore search of the islands from Mistaken to Winchelsea while the Cape Cockburn continued to search the open water areas.

The lightning was definitely getting closer, and began to assist us in our search by momentarily lighting the entire area better than any flares could ever do! But so brief! Rain began to fall lightly, diminishing our visibility. We set up the hand-held searchlights and used the GPS system to navigate around the reefs, shoals and islands, easing in as close as we could to look for any trace of a boat or person. We investigated several buoys and markers (ensuring they were not wreckage of some sort) as the rain increased and the lightning became more frequent and more intense. The Cormorant was making several passes through the area at low altitude, with the incredibly strong search light

paling as each flash of lightning in the clouds above it lit the area like daylight for a split second.

We were nosing around the rock nodules and reefs near Nanoose Bay when the storm hit. With a sudden wind swing, the wall of driven rain whipped the protected waters into a frenzy of short white-capped waves. The radar became useless as the screen showed only a pattern of white around us. In no time flat, water was running down our survival suits, through any and all zippered openings, and puddling in our shoes and boots. There was now less than a second between the searing flashes and subsequent boom of thunder drowning out the rumble of the twin outboards.

It was good timing that Comox now called off the search as nothing had been seen, and no more flares had been sighted. It was 1:45am. Going from pitch black to having a rock nodule brilliantly lit up a few feet away, then back to pitch black would have been unsettling if we had not been in a boat equipped for rough weather and night operation. The GPS system was so accurate that we could use it with complete confidence. We worked our way out of the maize of reefs and rock islands and sped up, heading for Schooner Reef. We kept to the inside and decided to run for French Creek instead of ducking into Schooner Cove. It was not long before we had outrun the major rain and motored into the now rough swells of the unprotected waters of the Strait. Keeping our speed down to about 25 knots, we easily cut through the building waves of the following sea. Off to our starboard were three cruise ships making their way into the storm, heading for Vancouver. The lightning was no longer as intense as we motored into the refuge of the French Creek Harbour.

As the regular crew were refueling the FRB, I took my leave and headed for the truck. The heavy, gusting rain was beginning in earnest as I stripped off my wet gear and tossed it into the back of the truck. I felt secure and less drenched in the cab driving through the wet, deserted streets. It was 3 am by the time I had hung my gear to dry and crawled into our warm, inviting bed.

Jeff Hale
Ballenas Cruisemaster



THE COASTAL WATCHER

The Newsletter for Crime-Conscious Communities

No. 31

April/May/June 2006

Compiled by Cpl A. E. Clarke and N. E. Treen

COASTAL WATCH SALUTES VOLUNTEERS!

RCMP Seize Drugs from Fishing Vessel MV BAKUR




At approximately 0230 on May 22, a tuna fishing vessel listing heavily and riding low in the water pulled along side a dock in Ucluelet. Awaiting the mooring were members of the RCMP

Greater Vancouver Drug Section, who subsequently searched the vessel, found a large quantity of marihuana, and took five individuals into custody.

The MV BAKUR, an offshore tuna boat, had traveled down the east coast to the Panama Canal, then up the west coast to Canada. With the assistance of various agencies, the RCMP tracked the vessel to its final destination, Ucluelet BC. The vessel was then towed, under heavy guard, to CFB Esquimalt where the search continued. Five men are facing drug smuggling charges in connection with this 1632 kg haul of marihuana.

Suspicious vessels are always of interest to RCMP Coastal Watch. In this circumstance, several indicators were evident which could have aroused suspicions:

- Traveling at night, when no other fishing vessels were moving
- Listing heavily to one side
- Riding low in the water
- Not fishing with other boats
- In poor condition



REPORT ALL SUSPICIOUS MARINE-RELATED ACTIVITY.



CALL THE 24 HR TOLL-FREE COASTAL WATCH REPORTING LINE.

1-888-855-6655

Coastal Watch Salutes Volunteers!

Although volunteer week has officially come and gone, we at Coastal Watch would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has, and continues to, lend his or her support to the program. The success of this program rests with the hardworking and diligent volunteers and members of the community, and would not function as it does with out everyone's support.



"A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm." -- Henrik Ibsen

And Now a Word from our "E" Division CO...

The following excerpt is from an open letter to volunteers by Deputy Commissioner - Pacific Region & Commanding Officer, "E" Division" (British Columbia), Beverley A. Busson.



"District & Detachment Commanders, Members & Employees, & "E" Division RCMP Volunteers:

National Volunteer Week, April 23rd to 29th, 2006 is a special time set aside each year to pay tribute to the millions of Canadians across the country who volunteer their time and give of themselves to better the lives of others. Here in "E" Division, the RCMP is privileged to enjoy the assistance of over 48,000 volunteers. These individuals assist our members and detachment personnel in a multitude of roles, giving freely of their time, talent and knowledge, helping to build better, stronger and safer communities.

To our Volunteers, you define the very essence of civic participation and community spirit through the service you provide to the RCMP. Your involvement in the delivery of policing services, and your commitment to assisting the RCMP to further our strategic goal of Safe Homes, Safe Communities is a tribute to you all. I am very proud of the positive contribution that the RCMP, Volunteers and the communities we serve, have been able to make. I thank you all for everything you do!

While I have spoken about our community citizens as dedicated volunteers, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to express my appreciation to our own members and staff for their role as volunteers. I know that collectively you give thousands of hours each year to your communities in a multitude of voluntary roles. Whether this is through your role as police officers or support staff, or by serving in community organizations or as youth leaders, it is these contributions that demonstrate your commitment and dedication, and for these efforts, I thank you!

Sincerely,

Beverley A. Busson, C.O.M.
Deputy Commissioner - Pacific Region & Commanding Officer, "E" Division"

Contraventions Act Enforcement in Effect



With summer boating season in full swing, boaters should be reminded that the Contraventions Act is now being enforced. With ticket books in hand, law enforcement personnel have the ability to issue fines on the spot, similar to traffic violations as seen on our motorways. The Act came into force in April 2005; previously, people who committed offences were charged and given a notice to appear, and the resulting court process was often lengthy and time consuming. Some sample fines are as follows:

Contraventions Act: Sample Fines	
• Speeding	\$100
• Operating a vessel in a careless manner	\$250
• Operation of a vessel without prescribed navigation lights	\$100
• Operation of a power-driven vessel without the required competency card	\$250
• Removal, alteration, concealment, damaging, or destruction of authorized sign without consent	\$150

A detailed listing of the fines and fees associated with the Contraventions Act Regulation can be found on the web at www.tc.gc.ca/boatingsafety. Click 'regulations' under the list found on the left-hand side of the web page, then Contraventions Regulations – fines and fees.

Bug Off!

Planning the perfect weekend camping trip? Unsure if you need to pack the mosquito netting and bug spray? Click on www.weathernetwork.ca/features/bugs to check the bug activity in your area; the site features advice on bug avoidance and other handy tips.



Colombian Police Train Rats to Find Mines



BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) - Watch out Fido, your days on the force may be numbered. Police in Colombia are training Lola and Espejo, two whiskered, red-eyed rats, to sniff out bombs and land mines. The rodents are part of an experimental six-rat squadron that police are preparing for dangerous missions to defuse the more than 100,000 land mines that litter Colombia's countryside after four decades of war between the government and leftist rebels. Unlike dogs, rats weighing less than half a pound each and "don't trigger any explosions when they walk on a mine," said Col. Javier Cifuentes, director of the Sibate police academy, where basic training is taking place. To earn their stripes, the rats have spent the past year undergoing a daily training regimen in which they are placed in a maze with C-4 explosives and other bomb-making materials. When they detect the target, they're rewarded with a cracker. Trainers estimate it could be six months before the rats are pressed into active duty. Cifuentes said he believes Colombia is the first country to use rats to conduct police work, though larger rodents are being employed for similar purposes in Sudan, he said.

"Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day." – Sally Koch

German swan falls in love with swan-shaped paddleboat five times his size

BERLIN (Reuters) – A swan has fallen in love with a plastic swan-shaped paddleboat on a pond in the German town of Muenster. Peter Overschmidt, who operates a sailing school and rents the two-seat paddle boat on the Aasee pond, said the black swan with a bright red beak has not left the white swan boat's side since it flew in one day in early May. "It seems like he's fallen in love," said Overschmidt. "He protects it, sits next to it all the time and chases away any sailboats that get anywhere nearby. He thinks the boat is a strong and attractive swan." Overschmidt said the swan will figure it out sooner or later but hopes he won't be too heartbroken. "I'll wish him all the best and hope that he doesn't make the same mistake again," said Overschmidt.



"Volunteering is so pervasive it's invisible. We take for granted all the things that have been pioneered by concerned, active volunteers." – Susan J. Ellis



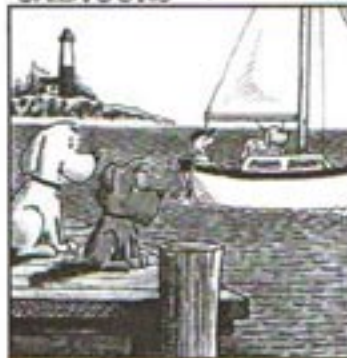
Did You Know...

You can now apply for your pleasure craft licence at any one of 320 Service Canada Centres across Canada. Under the Small Vessel Regulations of the Canada Shipping Act a pleasure craft licence (or 'K' number) is required for any pleasure craft measuring 12 m or less and powered by an engine 10 horsepower (7.5 kW) or more. There is no cost to obtain a pleasure craft licence, and the number must be displayed on the side of the vessel. This number is used to assist law enforcement and search and rescue organizations in identifying each individual pleasure craft. As of April 1, 2006 CBSA (Canadian Border Services Agency) will no longer be issuing these licences. To find the office nearest to your location, call 1.800.OCANADA (1800.622.6232) or visit www.servicecanada.gc.ca. For vessel regulations and licensing information visit www.tc.gc.ca/boatingsafety.

Overheard at the Detachment... Two detectives were investigating the murder of Juan Gonzalez. "How was he killed?" asked one detective. "With a golf gun," the other detective replied. "A golf gun? What is a golf gun?" "I don't know, but it sure made a hole in Juan..."



SAILTOONS by Michael Malzone



HE SAYS IT'S LIKE HANGING YOUR HEAD OUT THE CAR WINDOW BUT MUCH BETTER!