

FOR THOSE IN PERIL ON THE SEA...LET'S HAVE LESS OF THEM

Article by Jonathan Chilvers

The sea can be as kind and soft and gentle as a lover. But at other times she can be a harsh, cruel mistress, quite unforgiving of those who venture forth unprepared and unworthy. The goal of the Power Squadron (or *The Canadian Power and Sail Squadron* to give it its full title) is to help make sure that when sailors slip their mooring lines they know what to expect and will be ready for whatever lies beyond the breakwater.

The Power Squadron and the Saltspring Sailing Club are clearly two quite separate organizations. One is large and across Canada, the other is small and local. But their memberships are intertwined on this island of ours and they share the desire to have those who go down to the sea in ships be trained and equipped to come safely home again.

So this is to tell you a little about the local Power Squadron, its training programs and the people who organize and teach them, who are very frequently on Salt Spring, indeed nearly always here, also members of SISC. You may wish to take one of their courses; or volunteer to help teach one; or support the Squadron and its goals with a really very affordable annual membership. And if you did that, you could also get Free Stuff and valuable discounts on other Good Stuff! How could you resist?

Let's start with the absolute basics: the PCOC (aka the *Pleasure Craft Operator Card*). You know that if you skipper a boat around here, you must have one to stay on the good side of the law. It's pretty easy, pretty basic, and you can even take the

course and the exam online if you like. But it is a step up from the test of qualifications required to run a boat a few years ago, which was precisely nothing. This March the Power Squadron, using the facilities and some of the members of SISC, offered that course and the qualifying exam, which helped a number of novice boaters achieve this vital initial step.

What's next? After PCOC, one could move on to the Power Squadron's Boating 2 course, *Beyond Boating Basics*. In the very early months of this year, twenty students seized the opportunity to take the first part of this course and its examination in the SISC Clubhouse. Not all were Sailing Club members, but opening up to a slightly wider audience is a way that your Club can make a further contribution to safety at sea. After that, Boating 3 lies ahead (aka *Introduction to Marine Navigation*). On March 11, ten graduates of Boating 2 embarked on this new adventure.

Nor will they necessarily be finished then. Everyone with a VHF radio on board should have taken a short course and an exam and earned a license to attest to their competence. Power Squadron will be offering a two session course at SISC to help you get yours, starting on April 1. But trust me, this is no April foolery...you are legally required to have this license to operate the on-board radio that might help you and other boaters get safely home again. The Squadron and the Club can help you steer well clear of perils on the sea.

A smart sailor's salute would now be appropriate, to those who bring you these opportunities on a volunteer basis, some of them volunteering year after year after year. To name just a few, John Lugsdin is the local Power Squadron Commander; Michael Clark is the Education Officer; Laura Dafoe is in charge of Membership...she's the one you should be in touch with if you want to buy a membership to support the work of the Power Squadron (contact her at cps@saltspringsailing.ca). It will cost you a paltry \$35 in the first year. The three aforementioned folks are all also SISC members (and you could find them in the Club's 2019 Yearbook which you just acquired.) And there are many others who this year, and next year, and last year, and for all the years since the Salt Spring Power Squadron was formed in 1968, have helped islanders to be safer and more responsible sailors.

Join and you will get a free subscription to Canadian Yachting magazine, earn discounts on nautical needs at Mouat's and other suppliers of navigation equipment, insurance, etc. But far more valuable than any of that, you will be part of an important seafaring tradition and contribute to safer boating for all.

There are still more learning opportunities available to members that will add to your skills, boating enjoyment, and safety. The Power Squadron, in its many bases across Canada, offers courses on many subjects—from *Electronic Navigation* to *Engine Maintenance* to *Offshore Navigation* for those who venture out to the big, blue water. In different years our local squadron has also run some of these courses such as

Weather, Radar, and GPS. Maybe you have the time and talent to help make them happen again.

Our local Power Squadron has also sponsored and organized a series of annual presentations at the Clubhouse called *Favourite Anchorages*, which might open your eyes to some new cruising opportunities. If you want to know about these as well as Power Squadron membership, check the Power Squadron website at www.cps-ecp.ca, available courses at www.boatingcourses.ca, or our Club website at www.saltspringsailing.ca. You can also send an email to cps@saltspringsailing.ca to seek additional information.

In addition, Sailing Club members Sunshine Wilde and Laura Dafoe run a learning group called *Women on Water (aka WOW)*, which meets at the Clubhouse to discuss safer boating and to build knowledge, confidence, skill and camaraderie amongst our Club's women mariners.

These initiatives could all help us to stay clear of peril on the sea...and have more fun, too.

