

SPECIAL BOAT SHOW EDITION

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Boating education promoted at Boat Show

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Editor in Chief

Boating education, often identified as the solution to safety on the waterways of South Carolina, can be looked into by boating enthusiasts at two booths at Boat Show 2002 Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (Jan. 24-27) at the South Carolina State Fairgrounds in Columbia.

Traditionally, the United States Coast

Guard Auxiliary of Lake Murray and the Lake Murray Power Squadron both have encouraged boating safety at their booths at the Boat Show, and they'll be doing so again this year.

Both organizations will be offering to the public brochures and information on their boating safety classes.

Safety courses offered by either of these organizations are recognized by DNR as

effective ways to obtain knowledge on operating more safely on waterways.

Kent McCain, commander of the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary, emphasized that members of this organization would staff Flotilla 12-3's booth all during the boat show, and will be encouraging visitors to the booth to enroll in its boating course, scheduled Feb. 12 through March 19 at the Seven Oakes Recreation Center

on Leisure Lane across from the Honeywell Plant in Irmo.

"This represents a very convenient way for the boating public to sign up for classes where boating safety and seamanship will be taught," said Commander McCain. "Our safety course touches on all basic safety and federal requirements, and introduces students to such important boat-

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ing knowledge as the buoy system, basic navigation, knots, rules of the road, VHF radio safety and safety equipment, among other things."

In addition to promoting its safety courses, the Auxiliary also will be extending invitations to interested persons to join this organization.

"The U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary was formed by an Act of Congress in 1939 to 'indoctrinate all owners and operators of small craft in safety requirements of operation and navigation,'" informed Commander McCain.

"Translated, this means that the Auxiliary educates the boating people through public education courses and helps the Coast Guard in some search and rescue operations, in reporting hazards to navigation and in any other way we can when called upon to do so," he said.

He said the Coast Guard Auxiliary welcomes new members. "To qualify for membership, you must have reached your 17th birthday, be a citizen of the U.S. and desire to work at promoting safety on the water. Once a member, there are an array of courses open. Some are seamanship, navigation, safety examinations, weather, communications, search and rescue, patrols, instructor and more. The member decides what to pursue and when."

POWER SQUADRON

Rob Pollard, commander of the Lake Murray Power Squadron, said that members of this organization will be taking registrations for its USPS boating Course ("Boat Smart"), which begins March 4 at the Woodman of the World Lodge on Highway 1, West Columbia, and runs through April 1.

This course, according to Commander Pollard, is the Power Squadron's most comprehensive boating course available to the public and has been given as a public

service for boaters since 1924 by the USPS, America's largest private, non-profit boating organization.

The Lake Murray Power Squadron presents this course twice each year, in the spring and in the fall.

"The United States Power Squadron is the largest fraternal, self-sustained, boating organization in the world," Commander Pollard points out. "It is a non-profit, non-governmental organization of boatmen dedicated to the nautical education of boaters. The objects of USPS are to establish a high standard of skill in the handling and navigation of yachts (privately-owned boats) and to encourage the study of the science of navigation, piloting, seamanship and small boat handling."

He informed that USPS was organized in 1914 after the mechanically-powered squadron of the old Boston Yacht Club rescued the club's sailing vessels after they had been dismasted during a sea storm at sea. During World Wars I and II, USPS members were active in providing training to U.S. Navy and Merchant Marine personnel in navigation and boat handling.

"To recognize and honor this service to the country, Congress approved the flying of the USPS Ensign (Power Squadron flag) at the place of honor (stern staff) on boats owned and under the command of a USPS member," he said.

USPS members are eligible to wear the USPS uniform (navy blue and white) and insignia, similar to those of Naval officers and yacht clubs, according to Commander Pollard.

Originally organized in 1963 as the Congaree Power Squadron, the Lake Murray Power Squadron operates from its base headquarters at Flotilla Island, which it shares with the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary.

"Over the years, LMPS has helped educate several thousand boaters in the Midlands, providing them with boat handling and navigational skills and promoting boat safety," said Commander Pollard.

Marine VHF Radio Channels

Channel 16 - Calling and Distress Only

Channel 9 - Alternate Calling Channel for recreational boats

Switch to channels 68, 69, 71, 72 or 78 for conversation

Courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
Lake Murray Station