

Nautical Knots and Dodging Rocks

On the water with the Saanich Peninsula Squadron

BY HEATHER SLADE

Oh, swiftly glides the bonny boat,
just parted from the shore, and to
the fisher's chorus note, soft moves
the dipping oar! — Joanna Baillie

For many of us, getting out on the water is more than just recreation. It is a way of life, and a passion that keeps joy in our lives. The members of the Saanich Peninsula Power and Sail Squadron are not just passionate about boats, they are generous. This local chapter of the Canadian Power and Sail Squadron is run entirely by volunteers and those volunteers have been helping people be safe and find their joy on the water for 36 years.

North American Safe Boating Awareness Week was May 19 - 25 this year. "Everyone on the water should understand the rules of the water, it's not only for your own safety it's for everybody," says Len Burton, executive officer of the Squadron. "People wouldn't drive on our roads without a license and learned

driving skills, and the same applies on the water, people shouldn't go boating without safe boating knowledge. Period." This is what the Squadron does best, it prepares you. Since most boating accidents are preventable, a little knowledge goes a very long way.

Preparation comes in the form of a variety of courses offered throughout the year, teaching people everything they need to know to operate a boat safely, legally and with confidence. Their basic boating course includes instruction in compass reading, knot tying, handling a boat under sail and under power, course plotting, anchoring and much more for a very reasonable fee. Advanced courses in navigation, weather, radio operation and more are also available.

All of the teachers for the courses are members of the Squadron who took the courses themselves and then decided to give back to the organization that made it all possible.

Members are also able to act as proctors for future courses to help others and to refresh and build on their own knowledge.

Membership has other privileges, valuable ones. After you have taken the basic boating course, you qualify for membership for a small yearly fee. You reap the rewards, with up to 40% off your boat's insurance. You also receive the prestigious Canadian Power and Sail Flag (if you run up against a rock or do something else equally embarrassing, you're expected to remove the flag before you call for help!) and a regular newsletter to keep you up-to-date on all the goings-on in the boating community.

The Squadron is not just about education, though. A real camaraderie exists within the group. In addition to a few regular social events during the year, members get together and go cruising, sometimes for a day, sometimes for a week. This July, there is a group

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