

Saanich Peninsula Squadron, Student Cruise to Otter Bay / North Pender Island, Sunday October 30th, 2005

Submitted by Laura Parker, First Time Proctor:



The objective of the BOATING COURSE is to help students become safe boaters and to provide fundamentals of boat handling, point-to-point navigation, marine regulations, and courtesy. The objective of the CRUISE is to give students practical experience in using the information presented in the classroom and the homework.

Ah... I remember it well... as it had only been one year ago that I was a student on the cruise. Now, I was a proctor for the first time and almost felt as anxious. I wanted to do well; to help the students. I remember that there was soooo much to learn in such a comprehensive class given by knowledgeable, volunteer instructors! And then... we had to go out on the water and apply it all?! It seemed daunting... but we made it through and the information presented started to fall into place while doing the preparation for the cruise.



But then... arrgh!... "It's all happening so fast! - to take this bearing... to watch for that range... why are all the other boats over there? Are they all wrong and we are right?!" ;-). Oh gosh... I'm re-living my student experience...but even as a proctor I was wondering about all the other boats! But that is what I felt too from the two students I proctored... even though they were well prepared!

On this year's cruise there were 14 Boats & Skippers (including the Student Cruise Master, Bill Miller and Skipper Gay Miller on "Charlotte Time") who donate their boat, fuel and time to this event! This was Bill' first time go-round as SCM and he was terrific... every thing went off without a hitch-(knot)! Gay could be heard on channel 09 communicating with all the other skippers as to their status and ETA.



There were 15 Proctors, all past graduates of the Boating Course - many doing it for the umpteenth time because they really enjoy doing it! AND then there was the 27 gung-ho students! The weather was typical of the west coast at this time of year; cold and rainy! I am a sailor at heart, but found it pretty nice for a change to be warm and dry aboard "Aqua Verde", skippered by Dick Cotton. However, everyone made it to the marina!! and enjoyed the day!!



Ashore, at Otter Bay, the Pender Island Volunteer Fire Fighters gave informative instruction and the students practiced fire fighting themselves! The Saanich Marine Rescue Society answered all sorts of questions about marine emergency response services. A docking

exercise was performed by Ken & Joan Clarke on "Legasea" and an anchoring exercise was performed by Skipper George Winn and Martin Russell on "Tatoosh".

I missed these because I was visiting aboard as many of the boats as I could, to check them out! I didn't get a chance to do that as a student! Here are some comments from some of those involved:

Bill Miller, Student Cruise Master:

"A successful cruise is made up of many things going right, including interested and committed proctors, capable and unselfish skippers, all the students with all their anxiety working out, and the support we receive from the marina, the Pender Fire volunteers, and the Coast Guard crew."

Ted Meadley, Training Officer, Proctor on this cruise:

"The Student Cruise is the culmination of the students navigational training. They gain self confidence in the theory they have learned and in their ability to apply it on the water. It is understanding that they can not gain any other way. Or to quote a student on our boat a number of years ago, "*Damn! This "stuff" actually works!*".

Len Burton, MAREP Officer, Skipper on this cruise:

"The student Cruise is always a lot of fun. We try to keep things light and positive and fun for the students."

Janice Hayward, Instructor, Skipper on this cruise:

"First and foremost, other than instructing, Ron and I love to share our home, our experiences and our knowledge with the students who come aboard with us. As a Skipper, it is an exercise (especially with guests aboard) in how aware we must be of what is going on, on board the boat as well as be aware of what is happening around us; tide, current, wake, wash, other boats, kayakers, crab traps etc. As a Proctor, the student cruise reinforces the skills of navigation; bearings, charting, fixes, identifying nav aids etc. As long as we can participate in the cruises, you can count on us!" Janice, Ron and Winston Harris 1st (arf arf)

John Hudson, Executive Officer, Proctor on this cruise:

"I have greatly enjoyed proctoring cruises; this one must be about my 13th and the only time I missed proctoring since transferring to the squadron was when I skippered a cruise. During my time as proctor, I have had students who did not understand some aspect of the course and were initially lost. With patience and understanding and once at the expense of they not seeing the flare, anchoring and docking demonstrations, the student saw the light by the return trip and passed the course. These are the rewarding cruises."

Annemarie Middleton, Proctor on this cruise:

"I found it so much easier the second time around as a proctor. The first time I was a proctor on the cruise, I was quite nervous, and uncertain whether I could actually assist my students sufficiently. This time around, I found that after a quick review before the cruise, I wasn't nervous at all. It really is in my brain now!"

So, that is it for another successful student cruise! I'm signed up to proctor for the Spring Cruise already (let's hope for really nice weather!) I wish the students well, as they approach graduation and look forward to welcoming many of them on as new members to the Squadron! I would encourage them to take further courses and become involved in the Squadron - it is a wonderful experience!



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