

# UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS



## Mark 4



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### COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Elaine Pfaff, JN

I am having a hard time realizing that this is November, and that our boating season is over for the majority of us. Our boats are on the hard, and hopefully, winterized and covered. Now is the time for us to look at what we can do this winter. It is time to take some classes and/or seminars. Does your squadron have them listed on the Website? That is how we find the classes we want especially when our own squadron is not offering them. There are also Webinar Seminars that you might want to look into. The New York Boat Show will be at the end of January and they are looking for members to man our booth. Check our Website and fill in what time you will be able to help. Also, at the end of February will be the Annual Meeting in Orlando. There will be many sessions filled with valuable information and I am hoping to see many of you there. Let's not forget ladies; they have a great luncheon for us on Saturday, but in all fairness, men can also join. There is also the "Meet and Greet" suites on Friday night. There you will have the opportunity to go to all the suites and meet people from all over the country and exchange ideas. You will make many new friends that way. There are many excursions for those not attending meetings. Go early and have some fun but discounted rooms are going fast. Last year some members had to stay at other hotels, so make your reservations now. Check everything out on National's Web Site.

Last, but not least, this is the season to be jolly. Many squadrons are having holiday parties and have opened them up to all squadron members to attend. Rich and I will be attending many, and sharing their traditions. Many of the squadrons support children's charities, such as hospitals. Let's support them, even if we are not able to attend, with a donation. Many other squadrons are collecting toys that will be distributed to hospitals and organizations that will pass them out to the needy children that may not receive one from their family. We must keep in mind this holiday how very fortunate we are, and remember there are many that are facing adversity. Please also remember the food banks; people should not go hungry at any time of the year, but it is especially hard for them at the holidays. The next Council Meeting is January 4<sup>th</sup>, at Bistro 1051 in Clark, NJ, that is less than 1 mile off Exit 135 of the Garden State Parkway. You are all members of our District, and all are invited. The Nominations Committee will be making a report that evening.

Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas to all and May the New Year be filled with good health, happiness and a safe boating season.

Commander Elaine Pfaff, JN

## DISTRICT 4 FALL CONFERENCE 2016



National Education Officer  
Representative, William McManimen  
111, SN



The D4 Fall conference was called to order by D4 Commander Ellaine Pfaff on 5 November, 2016, at San Carlos Catering Facility in Lyndhurst, NJ. Representatives from all squadrons except Bronx attended as did many guests from District 3 who are always welcome. Our thanks go to the meetings committee for the arrangements made. They are rarely shown our gratitude for their work before and at the conferences.



P/C Joel Jones and P/R/C Vincene Aquilato at their meeting  
committee posts at the conference



### Awards were presented as follows

50 Year Anniversary - Lake Hopatcong  
50 Year Membership  
George Walker, P Barnegat Bay  
Chris Windeler, SN Lackawanna  
Harry Schoepe, SNal Raritan Bay  
Russell Prielipp, AP Shrewsbury  
Richard Liroff, N Watchung

### Educational Proficiency Awards

Danial Green Raritan  
John Maker Raritan

Youth Safe Boating poster winners  
Halley Aquilano, 6-8 yrs old  
Denise Aquilano 9-11 yrs old  
Tiffany Rogers 12-14 yrs old .

## Chapman Award



Each year the squadrons submit their choice to receive the Chapman Award for excellence in teaching. At the fall conference all candidates from the squadrons are considered and a winner is named for submission to USPS as the D4 candidate in the national competition. WE HAVE A WINNER. He is Jeffrey Taylor from the City Island Power Squadron. GOOD CHOICE. D4 was just notified that Jeffrey has been selected as one of three finalists nationwide with the final winner to be announced at the USPS Conference in February. GOOD LUCK.

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## *What Happened to D4 and what can we do about it.*

12 years ago I was fortunate to be elected district commander of District 4 by its 2300 members and 18 squadrons. My squadron, Northern NJ, had 230. Today there are 14

squadrons and 940 members left and Northern NJ, after merging with Saddle River, has about 100 members. Many of our squadrons are at risk as is our district due to inability to get new members and fill bridge posts (resorting to recycling of bridge officers). If the district does not survive, our squadrons will also disappear. We need to stop that from happening. Why are we at this stage? What are we to do about it?

Although my wife and I are in our 80's, we are still boating. We have switched from sail to power and this year, as usual, took our 41ft boat from New Jersey to Long Island Sound and up the Connecticut Coast for 10 days. The only USPS Ensign we saw was ours.

Where are our members hiding and why?

One answer is that we have aged and have failed to attract new boaters into our ranks.

Fact is that we have to stop further erosion and must reach boaters in our area and show them what we do and how they can benefit by joining us. Easy said, but how do we do so?

We must go where the boaters are, whether at a marina or yacht club, and present our case. We can do so by offering our courses and seminars there. When we do so, we must also give them an incentive to join a  
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squadron and help us in our teaching efforts. A few years ago I had the past commodores of my yacht club purchase 5 seminars which have since been offered to our members free of charge (texts are offered at cost and are generally purchased), our way of promoting safe boating. I also offer the ABC course each year and have between 5 and 10 students each year. Mostly I have 13 to 16 years old attend since all other members already have their required certificates. This can be done at marinas and yacht clubs by our members getting the “silent majority” members to participate in their own home bases.

The above approach is fine but give us a limited audience. We need to think outside of the box to survive. If we do not take steps now and our squadrons or district dissolve, any funds left in the treasury will have to be donated to other nonprofit organizations. Why not use the funds now in trying to reach boaters in New Jersey and New York?

District 4 has a list of all boaters in the states including 10,000 names and addresses. Using this list I suggest the following program be considered.

- 1) The list to be broken down to 3 locations, North Jersey, South Jersey and New York City. These locations to be used for presentation of a seminar. Invitations to be

sent out to boaters near these locations to attend the seminar at no cost.

Purchase of texts, optional.

- 2) At seminar, squadrons in that area to have members attend to sell participants on joining USPS.

Refreshments to be served to allow members to socialize with guests.

- 3) On joining a squadron, a new member to be offered a second seminar free (text book purchase optional). Possibly initial dues to be covered by the squadron or district.

- 4) Program to be run during winter and spring seasons when boaters are itching to find things to do and may welcome an invitation to attend a seminar.

- 5) A coordinator be designated for each location to work with squadron representatives. Locations in New Jersey could be Northern New Jersey headquarter, and Keyport Yacht Club, and a site to be chosen in New York City.

Maybe this proposal is same as a “Hail Mary Pass” in football, but that is what we need to stop the bleeding.

Better yet, maybe you have some ideas  
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that we should consider. Give us your thoughts by email to me at [djngem@aol.com](mailto:djngem@aol.com).

P/D/C David J. Meshulam, AP

Editor, Mark 4

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## NEWS FROM USPS

To promote safe boating, United States Power Squadrons has launched its new Digital Media Library online and as a free mobile app.

A showcase and repository for digital media focused on boating safety and safe boating education, the USPS DML includes a series of original videos showing how to prepare popular recreational motorboats for departure, operate underway, dock, secure them at their destinations, and more. Slideshows and images offer additional safe-boating educational material, boating-safety messages, and tips. Materials are uploaded regularly, and new videos will be added through the end of the year.

All digital media in the library is offered to the public at no charge. Users can sign up to be notified when new material is added to the library and to request information about particular boating topics.

“USPS DML videos target today’s recreational boaters who can benefit from timely reminders of safe boating practices and skills,”

said Marty Lafferty, USPS DML project manager. “Boat operators can bookmark DML videos of most value to them for playback on their tablets or smartphones just before engaging in boat maneuvers.”

The project is supported by the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard. Lafferty, past commander of USPS District 5, directed many USPS members and squadrons in the production of the videos.

To access the material, visit [uspsdml.org](http://uspsdml.org). You can also [subscribe to the USPS DML YouTube channel](#) and check out videos and behind the scenes content at the [USPS DML Facebook page](#) or [follow USPS DML on Twitter](#).

**AS PART OF OUR MISSION TO TEACH AND PROMOTE SAFE BOATING, GET THIS MESSAGE OUT TO ALL YOUR BOATING FRIENDS. THE SERVICE IS OPEN TO ALL, NOT JUST USPS MEMBERS. A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT ON YOUR LOCAL RADIO OR TV CHANNEL WOULD BE GREAT.**

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**The Deeper Significance of Merit Marks**  
**What Merit Marks Can Tell You About Your Squadron**

Wow! It’s already November and for most squadrons it’s time to collect  
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reports, create a list of candidates for a 2016 Merit Mark, and submit them to national for approval. It's the annual run up to our payday. And squadrons everywhere are busy at the task.

I found myself thinking at length about Merit Marks and what they mean. It dawned on me that they have significance beyond the obvious "pay" analogy if we choose to think about it.

The first and most obvious significance is at the individual of a Merit Mark level. It is a point of pride to the individuals who earn one because it demonstrates that they have kept their commitment to USPS by contributing significant time, energy and skills to the objectives of USPS and their squadron and/or district. (Refer to section 3.6 "Membership" of the USPS national bylaws.) It also demonstrates that the recipient has substantially shared in the overall workload of the organization; and when the individual has earned their 25th Merit Mark, there are also some modest financial benefits to be realized, although very few members who have achieved that level care all that much about that. All in all, that's pretty obvious.

At the organizational (squadron and district) level, Merit Marks can have additional significance and can reveal useful information to the organizational leadership. At the most basic level, the number of merit marks earned and the percentage of attainment for a given population reveals how broadly or narrowly the organization's workload is distributed within the unit. Having lots of members earn a Merit Mark is good. Having a large percentage of members

earning one is even better. The greater the percentage of members earning a Merit Mark, the greater is the level of participation in the organization's work. Additional evaluation can help to shed light on one or more operational areas that may need attention. For example, let's say that the number of Merit Marks earned in the latest year declined from the previous year. What caused the decline? Maybe the membership level also declined year-over-year. If the declining numbers were proportional to each other, the organization may need to focus on recruitment or retention – and maybe both. But if membership number was up year-over-year, while the number of Merit Mark attainment went down, then perhaps the squadron is not assimilating ("involving") newer members quickly enough. The solution may be to institute a mentoring program for newer members.

A more useful metric is to look at the percentage of members who earn Merit Marks annually because it already reflects the effects of participation and membership level.

This statistic also enables the organization to see trends over multiple years. It might be helpful to the organization to further "slice and dice" the numbers by dividing the squadron population into meaningful segments which share common characteristics. Doing this segmentation based on the length of membership, for example, adds another dimension to the picture.

Perhaps it shows that "newer members", "long-term members", and "medium-term members" have  
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differing patterns of involvement (and Merit Mark attainment rates). It could mean that long-term members are “ageing” out of recreational boating or that newer members have not received the same kind of “acclimatization” experience as previous members. By the way, the definition of those terms can easily vary from squadron to squadron depending upon the demographics of each unit.

What does all this signify? First and foremost, it won't likely provide the magical solution to our challenges, but if it gets us talking about them from a different perspective, we can identify areas to work on that we did not previously consider important. I believe that if we properly listen to what Merit Mark statistics are whispering in our ears, we can uncover numerous opportunities for improving the organization. We might learn that we need to know our existing members better and take steps to develop profiles of their wants, needs, preferences, and expectations of the organization. We may uncover a need for mentoring newer members so that they earn Merit Marks sooner. We might find advantages in developing some form of “member development” or “human resources” function (or call it what you wish) whose role is to proactively identify members who have time and effort to contribute to our organization. And wouldn't those member profiles come in handy for that purpose? This function would be different than the statutory nominating committee which focuses on selecting candidates for elective positions. It's a sad truth that most of

us are challenged to find enough people to carry out the existing tasks. The key is to find ways- even first small steps- to get started.

What's important is to bring Merit Marks and all that they signify to the forefront of our attention and our planning rather than allowing them to be one more mundane task that needs to get done at the end of the year. Let's reinvigorate the entire concept of the Merit Mark and ensure that every member recognize that earning one is important and should be “a big deal”. Let's set a goal of 100% for earning Merit Marks, and then let's work proactively to find “merit-worthy” work for every member based on their talents, skills and lifestyle. Let's plan to achieve that goal, perhaps starting with some of the ideas presented here and others that are surely out there. It seems to me that the Merit Mark might just be the single best health metric for our organization. Let's learn from them and make earning them a “must do” item in our planning.

Submitted by Lt Csaba “Chub”  
Varga, JN *opinion editorials*.

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**Mark 4 is the official publication of District 4, USPS. Published 4 times a year. P/D/C David J. Meshulam, AP, Editor, Gail Merson, Assistant Editor, with the help of many loyal members. Articles and announcements from (continued on page 8)**

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squadron officers and  
members are welcome by  
email at DJMGEM@  
Special thanks to P/D/C  
Richard Pfaff and  
Commander Ted Wallace for  
their excellent photos.**

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**ON THE LIGHTER SIDE**

A guy driving a small car pulled up to a stop light next to a luxury car. He rolled down his window and shouted to the other driver, "Hey, buddy, that's a nice car. You got a Hi-Fi sound system in your car? I've got a Hi-Fi sound system in my car!"

The driver of the luxury car looked over and said snobbishly, "Yes, I have a Hi-Fi sound system."

The driver of the small car said, "That's great man! Hey, you got a TV in there? You know, I got a TV in the back seat of my car!"

The driver of the luxury car, quite irritated by now, replied, "Of course, I have a television. My car is one of the finest cars in the world!"

The driver of the small car said, "Yes, a very cool car! Hey, you got a bed in there? I got a bed in the back of my car!"

The driver of the luxury car, upset

that he did not have a bed, sped away and went straight to the dealer, where he promptly ordered a bed to be installed in the back of his car.

The next morning, he returned to pick up his vehicle, and the bed looked superb. It came complete with silk sheets and a brass-trimmed headboard. It was clearly a bed fit for a luxury car.

So the driver began searching for the small car. He drove around all day and finally found it late that night. It was parked, with all the windows fogged up from the inside.

He got out and knocked on the window of the small car. When there wasn't any answer, he continued knocking and knocking until finally, the owner lowered the window, and stuck his soaking wet head out.

"I now have a bed in the back of my car," the driver of the luxury car stated arrogantly.

The driver of the small car looked at him narrowly and said, "You got me out of the shower to tell me THIS?!?!"

(The above copied from site of  
JOKE A DAY)



**(AND FINALLY, A BOATING JOKE)**

Two guys steal a boat and get drunk. After floating around for a while, one of them says, “Hey there is a hole in this boat”.  
“No problem, man” his friend replies.  
“It’s not our boat”.

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**AROUND THE SQUADRONS**

**Lackawana Sail & Power Squadron** was again hosted by **Caroline Markham** on 17 September. Attendance by members and members from many D4 Squadrons attended and enjoyed. Can you identify the guests and their squadrons?



**The hostess with the moistest Caroline Markham**



**More squadron guests**

**CITY ISLAND MARCHES IN  
LOCAL VETERANS' PARADE, 13  
November, Bronx, NY.**

**will have entries for next  
year.**

**Members of the City Island Sail &  
Power Squadron participated and  
trailed a tiny vintage tug boat.**

**From left to right: Charles Evers, P/C  
Jeff Taylor, Carline Evers and Zoe,  
Cdr Barbara Mandarano and  
Summer, P/C Gary Mandarano, P/C  
Susanna Taylor and Michael Croce.  
Michael's two children, Angela and  
Kubrick wearing their PFD's rode the  
tug's cabin and waved to onlookers.**

**It was a great day!**



**Raritan Bay Power Squadron  
took the initiative in  
sponsoring a youth safe  
boating poster contest. The  
winning posters will be  
entered in the USPS  
competition at the  
conference in February.  
Hopefully other squadrons**