

## Massachusetts group puts safety squad on the water

The article “Emergency team hits the water” (November/December 2006, p. 38) caught my interest because of my work with the Water Rescue Safety Patrol Program in Worcester County, Mass.

The first of its kind in the nation, WRSP has active-duty safety patrols that assist boaters in need. Our free services include towing, jump-starting engines, first aid and making the public aware of Massachusetts boating laws. We are not law enforcement but help promote safety on Lake Quinsigamond and act as first responders in any emergency. We are sanctioned by the Lake Quinsigamond Watershed Association, Shrewsbury’s water commission, the Shrewsbury Parks & Recreation Department and the Shrewsbury Police Department.

The service was started because many national organizations such as USPS and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary do not have the manpower or funding to patrol local waterways on a weekly basis. Our group comprises trained volunteers who use their own vessels to patrol the lake area on a regular schedule at no charge to the public. Each patrol runs for four to six hours with a qualified skipper and crewman. Many volunteers belong to USPS, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and other organizations.

Last year, our organization received a grant to purchase our first water-rescue vessel. For more information on our program, please visit our website at [www.wcsarteam.com](http://www.wcsarteam.com), or contact me at 508-269-2004.

—William Latimer

## Adjusting to a new USPS

Like other civic organizations, USPS is experiencing reduced membership because of economic and other societal influences.

To combat these issues, USPS is trying to increase its market share by re-vamping its educational program. One

## Cover Story December 1936 Vol.23 No.9

Alan Smith journeys to the South Pacific, where he learns the local legends, encounters native Fijians and enjoys Christmas amid brilliant flame trees and frangipani.

change involves seeking governmental acknowledgment of certifications to make USPS more attractive to the remaining pool of potential members.

However, boating education and safety remain the core mission of USPS. Recent increases in boating accidents and deaths in the Great Lakes as well as the poor boating practices we observe every day demonstrate the need for our worthwhile service. This truth recently hit home for me when my niece’s best friend died in a boating accident near Algonac, Mich.

The advent of USPS University will require all of us to rethink how we do business. Each of us must be willing to accept and help mold these changes as we adjust how we work within USPS. Our instructors will need to learn new materials, and the shorter seminar format will allow members who declined to be instructors because of time constraints to reconsider.

It’s back-to-work time for USPS. Change can be fun—let’s enjoy it.

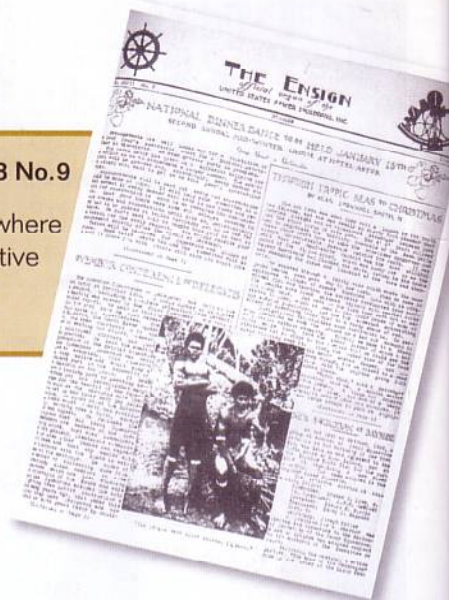
—Scott Corlew

## It’s time to spill the secret

I can’t begin to tell you how excited and energized I was when I read about the new USPS University and seminar concept. Finally, we have a way to introduce more people to USPS and local squadrons.

However, my excitement about the new concept was short-lived. In fact, it died when I prepared to order the books and looked at the price of materials for most of the two-hour seminars: \$20 for student materials and \$20 for instructor materials.

Why have we elected to print seminar materials and charge \$20 plus shipping instead of placing them on the



website for free download? If you were new to boating, would you pay \$20 for a two-hour GPS seminar, rely on the salesperson’s knowledge of GPS or read your GPS owner’s manual?

We need to wake up. We have lots of competition out there! We compete for time, especially with younger adults who have children at home, and we compete with other educational opportunities: Coast Guard Auxiliary courses, free state-sponsored courses, free Internet courses that produce a certificate of completion that may secure reduced insurance rates, local marine dealers offering courses to buyers, boat clubs giving free boating safety courses to members and the list goes on.

Squadrons providing nationally recognized seminars to nonmembers is a great recruiting tool, but in my opinion, the cost of seminar materials is out of line and will only negate the program’s benefits.

We can use the best graphics and printed materials, have the most energetic and interesting instructors, be the best national boating organization yet fail for lack of attendees.

You may have heard that we’re the best-kept secret on the water. If we keep pricing ourselves out of the market, we’ll continue to keep our secret.

—Tom Metcalf

Send your letters to The Ensign at P.O. Box 31664, Raleigh, NC 27622 or [ensign@hq.usps.org](mailto:ensign@hq.usps.org).