

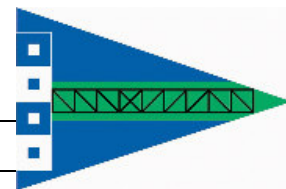
# THE BRIDGE



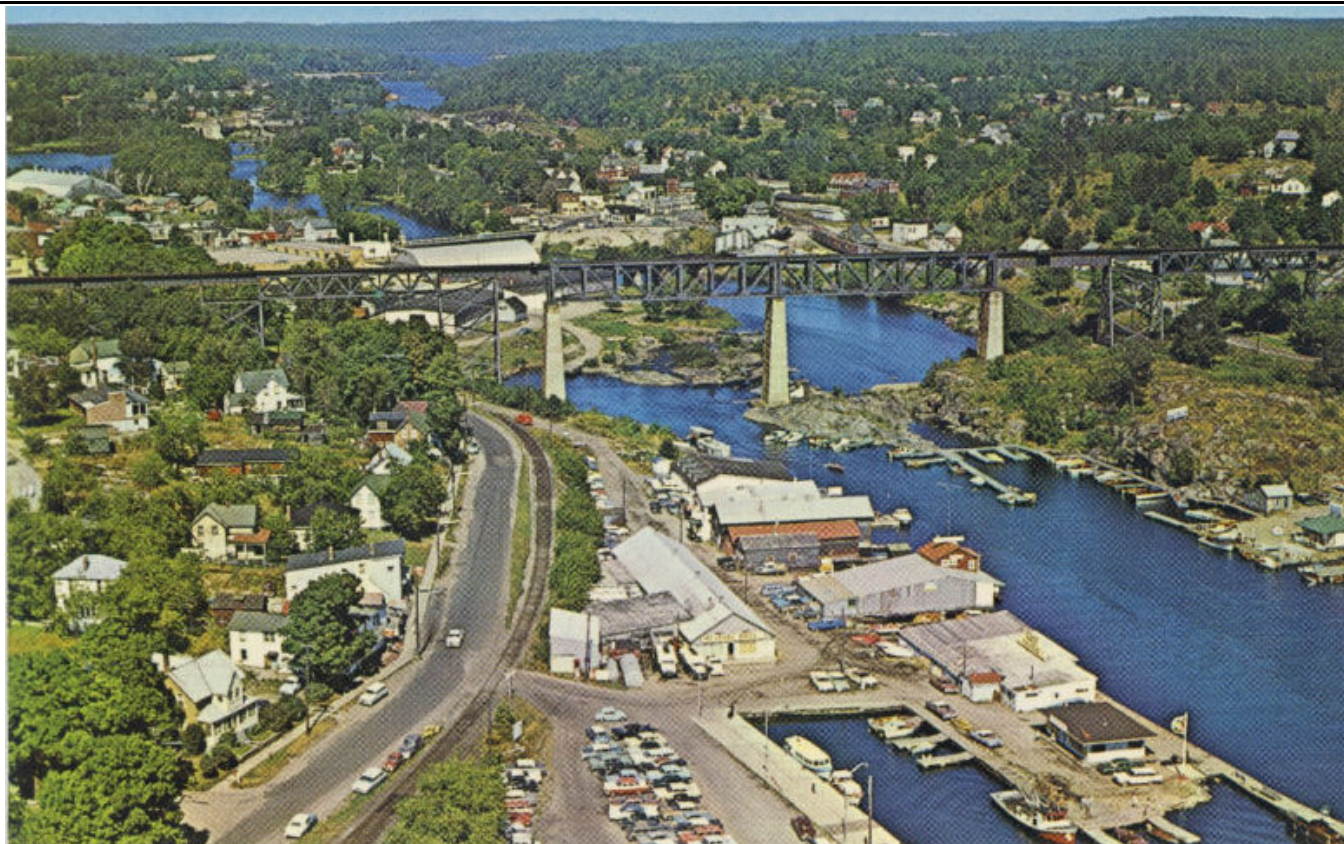
Communication to join, support and connect the members of  
**PARRY SOUND POWER AND SAIL SQUADRON**  
a unit of Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons since 1961

**Celebrating 50 years in support of safe boating**

[www.parrysoundsquadron.ca](http://www.parrysoundsquadron.ca)



Autumn 2011



*Fifty years ago, at the bridge*

## A PERFECT RECORD

We're preserving our perfect record for tardiness. Here it is November 1 and we're just getting around to putting out the fall issue of *The Bridge*; not only was there the matter of getting boats mothballed for the season, but in our case, selling one (painful) and purchasing another one (fun!), with all the horsing around that comes with that sort of thing. Also...yours truly, the Squadron Scribe, has been involved in the publication of a new book, *Witnessing the Badger: an Adventure Story for Young Boaters of All Ages*. Writing a book and going through the publication process is

like being devoured alive, but it's all done now and there is now time for other important things, like *The Bridge*.

About *Witnessing the Badger* – collectively, we are all “young boaters of all ages” and much of the story takes place right in and around Parry Sound. Moreover, there are certain characters that reflect people we know, with, of course, names changed to protect the innocent. As soon as a book launch can be arranged, there'll be a special signal to that effect, enabling you to get a jump on Christmas shopping.

**The BOATING COURSE**  
**Tell your friends the next Boating Course**  
**starts on January 16, running each Monday**  
**and Wednesday evening. Please contact**  
**John Mason or Andy Devos to register.**

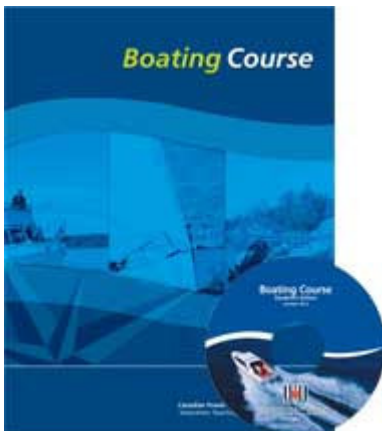
## CPS COURSES

We plan to offer **Boating Basics** leading to the PCOC, otherwise called the Pleasure Craft Operator's Certificate; or, simply, "The Card".



Transport Canada and CPS have agreed that taking a course is a small investment that has a big payoff. It will help you to be more aware of safe boating practices and is a practical and reliable way to reduce the numerous risks that lurk out on the water. Having the boating card is the proof of competency you need and taking a course helps you to be, well, competent.

We will be offering the course, handbook, and test for the price of trying the test at Canadian Tire or other service provider and less than on line. And it will be less still if you already have the card. And why take the course if you already have the card? It is a great opportunity to consolidate existing knowledge and generally keep yourself "in the zone" during the off-season.



We plan to run the course in **Boating** starting January 16 (12-13 nights). Pass this along to your

boating buddies who may need further boating competence, especially if they have moved up in boat size or plan cruising further afield.



If you operate a VHF radio, you must have a **Maritime Radio** licence with you at all times, [Restricted Operator Certificate \(Maritime\)](#) - [ROC(M)] even if your unit is a hand-held in a kayak or canoe. If you already have the licence but only use a radio occasionally, you might find taking the course (it's short) useful anyway in order to refresh yourself on radio protocol.

If you encounter an emergency, you don't want to find yourself fumbling around under the pressure. And there's nothing more infuriating to professionals than amateurs who don't know what they're doing. (And significant fines apply to unlicensed use of the VHF radio.)

We can arrange to offer **Seamanship and Advanced Piloting** to interested persons. One of our members is interested in working on the navigation course, but would like company. Anyone interested in one of these advanced courses is invited to call Andy Devos (705-773-9527) or John Mason (705-342-1315).

## SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

A relatively new buzz-word is "situational awareness", although the idea is as old as boating itself. The idea is to monitor *everything* happening around you. Anything could be going on – a vessel in distress or aground, a swimmer in trouble, a plane about to ditch – the possibilities are endless. And even if nothing like that may happen in a boater's entire career on the water, we need to be ready.

Situational awareness can be a sticky matter for the solitary sailor. Here you are, out in the great beyond, keeping track of your course, your



heading, aids to navigation, sail trim, *and* situational awareness. You almost need compound eyes and a universal joint in your neck.

Here is a personal case in point. Back in 2008, I was southbound on the Small Craft Route, coming out of Cunningham's Channel just north of Britt. There is a right-angle turn to port at the outer end of the channel and, just beyond the turn, coming the other way at full bore, was a large cruiser with two guys on the bridge, both looking fixedly ahead. Uh-oh, I thought, if nobody looks around, they're going to miss the turn. And miss it they did, heading straight for a rock-filled dead-end bay.



Fortunately, I had my horn at the ready and blew five blasts to indicate that they were standing into danger. They didn't hear me the first time, so I blew again, preparing myself for an epic rescue if they piled up. This time they heard me, stopped their ship just in the nick of time, and started turning around. It didn't make the papers the way a rescue would, but no boat got wrecked and nobody got hurt. The situation wouldn't even have arisen if the guy doing look-out on the cruiser had thought to scan side-to-side as well as ahead.

And don't forget to keep track of what is astern to see what is coming *and* if you passed a smaller vessel safely.



Canoes and kayaks are especially vulnerable to any sort of wash or surge in a narrow channel, as are sailboats in a light breeze or under power.

## IT WAS A DRAG, PART II

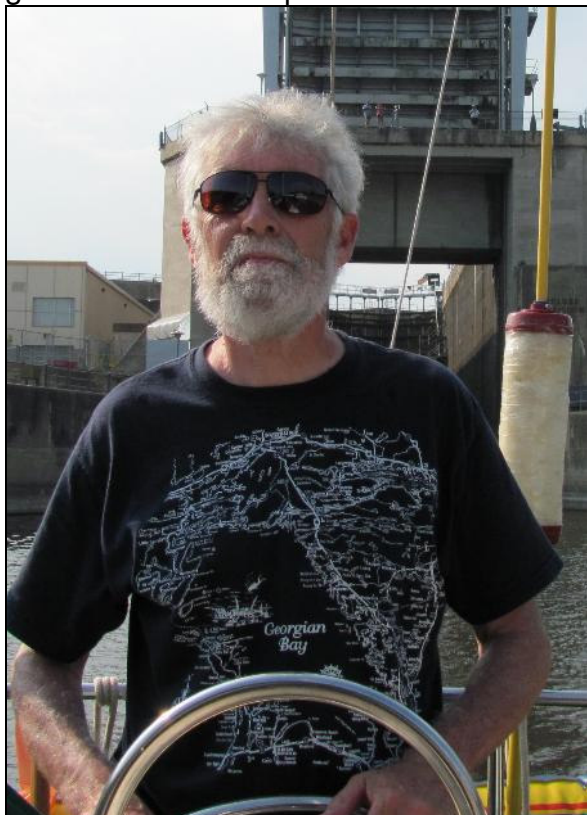
*This is a continuation of **It Was a Drag**, whose first part, contributed by **John Mason**, appeared in last winter's issue. John was helping his brother George sail George's boat **Farouche** from Ottawa to Prince Edward Island and we partying company with the Mason Brothers at Lac St. Pierre, Quebec. Now John continues his saga...*

In the first part of the story, I left you as I contemplated the current taking us down to Quebec. That problem solved, I should mention that we ate well on the boat. We had no barbecue, but, with a propane stove, spaghetti carbonara, ragout a la Mason, and chicken stir-fry, we managed very nicely. I think George had a different kind of "camping" in mind, as our first dinner aboard had been macaroni and cheese. Perhaps he spent too much time at university, but to his credit, he improved the dish to the extent that I have copied his recipe.

The next day, we motored across Lac St. Pierre to Three Rivers. How many times had I heard "*On one dark night on Lac St. Pierre, de wind she blow, blow, blow...*" But, as with my three previous crossings, St. Pierre was calm and no cook needed to be tied to the mast.

Just beyond Three Rivers was a very basic marina and we and BUMPED in the channel between the buoys in the approach channel. We asked several people, but could not get consistent instructions as to how we should avoid that rock on the way out. The marina is a good one for the traveler to miss; there was a small

chandlery, but no store and only a snack-bar serving pre-made plastic food. As well, the whole place was over-priced. But after three days and over a hundred miles, we did have a chance to get the mast back up.



The following day, we had to wait for high tide so there would be enough depth for *Farouche* at the mast crane. I think it must have been the first day for the lad operating the equipment. And there were the usual language problems, as neither my “franglais” nor my French sailing dictionary were enough. But the mast did get up all right, although we bent one arm of the Windex.

With our just-acquired local knowledge, we waited for a higher tide and only grazed that pesky rock on the way out and onward to Batiscan...or so we thought. In the centre of the channel and only a quarter of a mile from the marine, we dragged to a stop. Mud! This posed a problem; if we went to Batiscan, we would have to catch the tide before the next dawn, a prospect that didn't appeal.

So we decided on Deschaillons instead and I turned the boat and dragged back through the mud. *Farouche* handled differently from other boats in my experience as she turned easily in the mud by powering prop wash onto the rudder. But then I have never spent much time in mud or sand either.

It turned out that Deschaillons hadn't enough

water for our keel at low tide and George wasn't very happy about sitting on the bottom for the night. So we motored on to Port Neuf, but, not long on our way, we were to have a pleasant surprise. The strains of *O Canada* broke from the trees and it turned out that someone plays the appropriate national anthem for the flags of passing vessels.

On our passage to Port Neuf, we were motoring against a flood tide. I checked both sides of the river, looking for a spot where the current would be less. As we changed sides of the river in the gathering dusk, George asked, “Is that a ship coming our way?” Sure enough, he had noticed some lights thought to be in Port Neuf were in fact moving our way. We were well out of her way, but the ship still was not impressed and honked her horn and lit us up. By the time we made Port Neuf, it was too dark to search for a way into the marine.

I share a sailor's common fear/nervousness of entering strange harbours at night, so we simply joined another boat anchored out of the harbour and the shipping lanes. *To be continued next issue.*

## 100 KNOTS AND OFF THE CLOCK

*Those of us who have cruised into “foreign waters” can identify with John's story. But, for sheer terror, read this condensed tale of the 2011 Chicago-Mackinac Race.*



*Photo courtesy Chicago Yacht Club*

For the 361 yachts entered in the Chicago yacht Club's 103<sup>rd</sup> race to Mackinac, the first 30 hours or so were text-book sailing – plenty of favouring wind, kindly sea-state, warm air, sailing at its best. Then, at about 2300 on the night of July 17, lightning started flaring across the sky, spinnakers came down, and heavy-weather sails went up. How many of us have had to do this at night?

*Continued*

Then came the wind, sixty knots worth, which is bad enough if it's one of those 15-20 minute summer storms, but this turned into something else. Blown sails were the least of everyone's problems. There were sustained winds of *upwards of 100 knots* and the spectacle was totally horrifying. There were reports of constantly strobing lightning, water being vapourized into a fine, driving mist, and winds actually blowing *downwards* in the sort of micro-burst pattern that sank *Pride of Baltimore* and, just last February, the Canadian "tall ship" *Concordia*. But this was more prolonged and heaving-to just wasn't an option. All the boats could do was lie a-hull and hope not to drift ashore; some vessels were making leeway at as much as nine knots.

Sadly, and for the first time in the race's history, two people perished in the melee, both from the yacht *WingNuts* out of Saginaw, Michigan.



Photo: [themorningsun.com](http://themorningsun.com)

We're certainly not trying to scare anyone off the water, but this tale certainly reminds us that it is Mother Nature who is in charge. So, please, do be prepared to the best of your ability. Know your boat, know your equipment, and, above all, know yourself.

**THE BRIDGE:** this is the team serving you for 2011-2012. If you need information, have a question or need help with something related to the Squadron, feel free to contact the appropriate person to help you. And if you have a story for this newsletter, please contact [editor@parrysoundsquadron.ca](mailto:editor@parrysoundsquadron.ca)

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