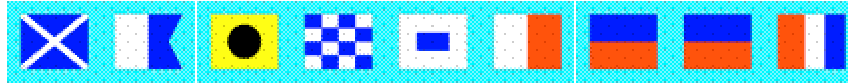

The Mainsheet



November 2006



TOWARF Spring training session

This training session was timed to coincide with Safe Boating Week and demonstrate to local boaters and the public, how TOWARF functions. More photographs, and an article from Dave Elliott, TOWARF Commander, are below.

The Town of Oakville Water-Air Rescue Force (TOWARF) is a 52 year old organization formed by Fred Oliver after the tragic drowning of two Oakville Sea Scouts and their leader in 1954. Fred had a vision of building a viable search and rescue structure built solely on volunteers. TOWARF began with six launches at its disposal at Oakville Harbour, much to the chagrin of many who said an operation such as this would not last.

To-date TOWARF is a member of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxilliary and also works in close affiliation with the Oakville Power Squadron, Harbours Advisory Committee and the Oakville Police and Fire Departments

TOWARF enlists the volunteer resources of approximately 90 dedicated and loyal members. Members of the organization are trained year round

in Oakville Power Squadron boating courses, Search and Rescue, Radar/Plotter, Seamanship, Radio License, Navigation, GPS, First Aid and CPR. TOWARF's executive is comprised of Commander, Vice Commander, Secretary/Treasurer, Rear Commander, Searchmaster, Harbours Advisory Representative and Council Representative. TOWARF also boasts many active committees that are committed to the efficient operation of the organization and the promotion of boating safety. TOWARF welcomes new members who can afford volunteer time to assure that the waters of Oakville are serviced and protected.

TOWARF is operational from the middle of May until the end of October consisting of a very structured chain of command. There are eleven crews consisting of a captain, acting-captain and six crew members, one of whom mans the radio room. The hours of operation are Monday to Friday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from noon until 10 p.m. However, hours are extended whenever the call of duty is needed. TOWARF also has a call-out programme which is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All boaters in distress should be aware that they can contact the Canadian Coast Guard via the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC), channel 16 on the VHF radio or star 16 by cell phone.

TOWARF averages approximately 50 search and rescue calls per season. They consist of medical emergencies, running aground, electrical or mechanical breakdowns, capsizing, fire, running out of fuel and losing direction while navigating through the waters.

It is the countless hours of time and dedication that the members of TOWARF give so freely of that are the backbone of the organization. Invaluable help also comes from responsible, private citizens (Coast Watchers) who report an emergency to the members of TOWARF, who so readily search, save and assist whenever the need arises.

Commander Dave Elliott
TOWARF

(For further information, go to
www.towarf.com - ed)



A lovely day to be close to the water



Too close!



It really was just a practice run



New Social Events

Yet another boating season has come and gone

. . . but I am sure we all have some great memories. For me winning my Division in the Lake Ontario Racing Council (LORC) is certainly THE highlight. Having to drop out of the Lake Ontario 300 mile race, because of a broken gooseneck was a real bummer.

Anyway, to make the winter months a bit more bearable, I would love to get together over a beer to swap stories of our boating season. In addition there must be some Squadron members, who could put an interesting presentation together.

The Oakville Yacht Squadron has graciously made their "Crow's Nest" available for such gatherings. It is heated, furnished, has cable TV, video and VHS equipment and holds about 40 people. Bottled and draft beer and wine sell for a measly \$3.50 and 1½ ozs. of your favourite spirits for \$4.00 (mix included).

To kick this idea off I suggest **we meet at the "Crow's Nest" at 7:30 pm on the first Friday of every month**, starting Friday, December 8th. I'll bring a pretty interesting and personal video, which was shown many a time on **the Discovery Channel's "Storm warning!"** and will twist your Commander's arm to show his presentation on the Trent - Severn Canal adventure.

To pull this off, we do need your E-mail address, so that we can keep you up to date easily on the proposed programs. Please take a moment and send Fraser Farmer, our membership officer, your name and E-mail address. **DO IT NOW, PLEASE**, even if you think we have your E-mail address. Fraser's E-mail address: (pipelink@sympatico.ca).

Copy me at richard.bodt@gmail.com if you plan to come Friday, December 8th. First come, first served.

Fraser will update our database and that will allow us to send you a monthly or bi-monthly update instead of the 1 or 2 hardcopy issues of the "Mainsheet".

Let's make the best of this winter.

Richard Bodt
Publicity Officer

We need your e-mail address

This newsletter is mailed only twice (occasionally three) times a year. This is not the best way to keep members up to date with events. Most of our communication with members is via the web site, but e-mail is important for reminders or for changes to events. Hence the appeal for e-mails from our Membership Officer, Fraser Farmer, printed below.

From time to time we send e-mails to update members on such things as upcoming courses and events. At present we have e-mail addresses for only about 30% of members.

To see if we're missing your e-mail address, please go to the Oakville Squadron web site at: <http://oakville.cps-ecp.org> ; click on "see list of missing e-mails". If your name is on the list, please e-mail your e-mail address to Fraser Farmer at pipelink@sympatico.ca . Your e-mail address will only be used for Oakville CPS notification purposes and will not be divulged to any other parties. At any time, if you wish to stop receiving e-mails from Oakville Squadron, just send Fraser an e-mail with Unsubscribe in the Subject heading.

Two appeals for e-mails side by side? YES - we really do need your e-mail address. Note that if you change your mind about the Squadron sending information that way, Fraser *will* take you off the list.



Radio room at TOWARF

Another Bronte Harbour Update

In the last issue of Mainsheet, it was reported that the fuel docks and pump out in Bronte Harbour would be open 7 days a week from 7am to 7pm. Next thing, the fuel storage tanks and pump out had been removed. No guesses on whether or not they will be replaced. Bronte did, however, get a boardwalk, and new power and lighting units. The power pylons now have two 30A outlets each, instead of the four that were in place in the old boxes. Progress?

Dredging is set to begin in Bronte in November. Keep your fingers crossed.

To cover or not to cover

Looking around the boatyards you will see everything from completely uncovered boats to those with just the cockpit covered to those with mansions built on. Is covering really necessary? Your choice, of course, but consider these points:

Water will find its way into any gelcoat cracks, under any fittings with not-quite-perfect bedding, under instrument bezels, and so on. When water freezes, the ice expands and exerts large forces. This is how Nature crumbles mountains. What chance does your boat have?

Another factor is the weight of snow in the cockpit. It is probably less than the weight of four people, but it is in place for weeks or months, not hours.

Then, if you do use a cover, the ends of the frame may damage the deck, especially after a heavy snow fall, and the edges of the cover and the grommets scratch the gelcoat of your hull. You also probably feel obliged to drive 50 km to check the cover every so often to be sure it has not collapsed. Your choice!

Battery Care in the Canadian Winter

What to do with the boat batteries is always a hot topic at this time of year. Well, there is good news, and there is bad news.

The good news is that our winters are cold enough to slow down chemical reactions in a battery significantly, so you may as well leave those heavy batteries on the boat. After all, a properly charged battery in good condition will not freeze, and the sulphation reaction (which is the main killer of unused batteries) will be almost nil. Those of us who take the batteries off the boat and keep them in a nice warm basement will not only have bad backs, but bad batteries in Spring.

The bad news. First is safety. Battery acid is concentrated sulphuric acid, and will eat through clothing and skin very quickly. Getting it in your eyes is REALLY bad news. An immediate visit to Emergency is called for. Having a container of fresh water handy is a good idea. Wearing eye protection and rubber gloves is even better.

It *does* take a bit of effort to prepare the battery for the cold spell. Check that the level of liquid in the individual cells is a few millimetres above the plates. (Some batteries are sealed and this is impossible). If the liquid is low, add distilled water only - NEVER try to add more acid. Now make sure the battery is fully charged. Use a charger which can give enough current for your battery. A large deep cycle battery will need a 10A charger minimum. Chargers which reduce the charging current as the battery approaches maximum charge are best - but more expensive. A fully charged battery will have a voltage of around 12.5 - 13.6 V, but the best check is to measure the specific gravity of the acid. A simple battery hydrometer can be had in Canadian Tire for around \$6 including tax. A fully charged battery has a specific gravity of 1.265 - but in winter, the reading will be a little higher, in summer a little lower. At

50% charge, the specific gravity is 1.190. Battery hydrometers which measure temperature and have temperature compensation tables can be had in specialist auto suppliers, but of course cost more. In short, if the hydrometer is not in the green in winter, you need a new battery. Don't let the hydrometer drip acid on anything, and wash it out with water when finished. The last bit of bad news is that you should still check the battery a couple of times over the winter and charge it if needed.

Finally - make sure the top of the battery is clean. Dirt between the terminals will trap condensation and create enough of a conducting path to discharge the battery over the months it is not in use.



Fall Colours

What better way to view the fall colours than by boat? Of course in the mailed copy, the colours are not very obvious, but check our web site for the PDF version in full colour.



These four are a progression taken by Paul O'Hara at the north end of Lake Couchiching.

It looks as if Paul is about the only Oakville member who owns a camera, and his images have been featured here before. If we had enough submissions, we could have a great photogallery on the website - a way to share your favourite boating photographs with other Oakville members.

If you have not seen it already, check out the photogallery of Kristy Black's South African trip on the web site. Her article appeared in the Mainsheet last year, and was featured in "Porthole" in the last issue. The gallery has more photos.

If you would like to share your photographs, you can e-mail them to the editor hughramsay@sympatico.ca - but please no more than 8 megabytes at a time! Call 905-827-3005 if you would like to send a CD of images. Better still, bring a CD of your images to the Crow's Nest at 7:30 pm December 8th!

Commander's Message

With most of our boats put away for the season, and watching the leaves falling, it is this time of year when our Squadron is really geared up for giving our slate of courses. We have in excess of 20 Boating Course students this Fall, with another 24 already signed up for next Spring - so your Squadron Training Dept is in full swing. We are offering as well, the Advanced and Elective Courses that are popular, and together with some social time with members, are looking forward to another busy year.

The winds of change are blowing through CPS-ECP, following on the surveys responded to by members following on the acceptance of the Strategic Plan. At the last Governing Board meeting several Motions were put forward concerning a reduction in the wearing of uniforms, a change in the military style ranks, a 'tag' line to be used in conjunction with the CPS name, etc. Most of these Motions were withdrawn following much discussion at all levels, and were assigned to various departments for further study. Most of the Motions will come back in the Spring to be reviewed again, and put into place if our members are in favour of the changes. Your Oakville Squadron Bridge members are involved in discussions on these matters, and making their views known. After all, if you do not respond, you cannot complain if you have not been a part of the decision making.

The CPS-ECP AGM & National Conference was recently held in Vancouver, BC, with Oakville members present. I was fortunate in winning the Canadian Hydrographic MAREP Award, and our Squadron and District took the "Most Improved" Awards also. Our District, York West, took several of the National Awards this year, so we had something to be proud of. The Conference held over a 3 day period, hosted Training Meetings, Governing Board Meetings, Squadron Commanders' Meeting and a host of seminars and educational sessions. The

new Electronic Charting course was unveiled, supporting the trend to offer more courses in this subject to our members. Also presented was an overview of the new Web Based Administration system, which will replace our paper forms to a great extent. Its implementation will go into the next 2 years, bringing each function in over time. It is hoped that this will do away with much of the duplication of data, and allow more time for us to devote to our main mandate of bringing our educational programmes to the public and our members.

I would encourage any of our members that wish to get involved in working with the Squadron to get in touch with us, we can always do with more crew on board! I wish you all a safe and happy Holiday Season - and that Santa is good to you!

Sincerely,
John Hinksman. SN
Commander

Toronto Boat Show

CPS needs volunteers to man the booth at the January Show. A benefit is free entrance to the show, and you will have time to browse after your short spell of duty. The schedule is not available yet, but you can e-mail Herb Rufft for information at herbru@aci.on.ca.

Winter Courses

For more information on courses, visit our website at <http://oakville.cps-ecp.org> or e-mail the Training Officer, Ziggy Gaweda at ziggy100@sympatico.ca

