

THE PORTHOLE

APRIL 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

WINDSHIFTS	32
VANTAGE POINT	33
WELCOME NEW BOATERS	38

**FROM PACIFIC
TO ATLANTIC...
BY CANOE
34 - 37**

**CPS-ECP EDUCATION KEY
TO REALIZING CROSS-
OCEAN DREAM
40 - 41**

The pages of Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons | Escadrilles canadiennes de plaisance
Send your photos to: theporthole@cps-ecp.ca
Cover image: "Common Loons swimming on Swan Lake, BC" by Benoit Brummer (Troughnourf)





Paul M. Rellinger, Editor-in-chief, The Port Hole

Back in the day, a major American credit card company struck gold with its advertising slogan "Membership has its privileges" Few times have just four words so perfectly framed a corporate message. Even those who weren't tempted to stash that particular credit card in their wallet knew full well what company that slogan was associated with – the true benchmark of advertising success.

Earlier this year, I certainly learned that membership indeed has its privileges and, in particular, in the CPS-ECP realm. That revelation came as a result of a series of interviews I conducted with CPS-ECP membership benefit providers.

Some background. When plans were being formulated for the 2022 Toronto International Boat Show, CPS-ECP went to work on its own plan to again have a marked presence at that event. As such, I was tasked with doing live sit-down chats with membership benefit providers at our booth. Alas, COVID-19 intervened, this time via its nasty omicron variant, and the show went the virtual route.

That was that, or so I thought. To use a term that has received way too much play over the past two years, CPS-ECP pivoted. The interviews would indeed proceed, conducted virtually for later posting on our website and social media platforms.

Besides the inherent value of providing our membership benefit providers with a great platform to extol the success and attributes of their respective organizations and businesses, this was an equally welcome opportunity for me. Having been embraced by the CPS-ECP family in late 2019 just a few short months before COVID cast its dark shadow, I have had few opportunities to spend time with those be-

hind-the-scenes people who are central to our success. This exercise allowed me to put faces to names. That is never a bad thing.

But the big takeaway for me, and I hope for those who watch the segments, was the pride each displayed, via their words and body language, in their relationship with CPS-ECP. Yes, at the end of the day, their association with our organization is good business, but their knowledge of CPS-ECP and its core mission is as impressive as it is reassuring. During the course of each interview, I used the term "partner" several times for a reason. We are on the same page.

In addition, this exercise reminded me, as it should remind every CPS-ECP member, that membership has its privileges, be it discounts on products or services. A full listing of those benefits can be found at <https://www.cps-ecp.ca/membership-cps-ecp/member-benefits/> You are well advised to take a look if you haven't for awhile and take full advantage. When combined with the very reasonable annual CPS-ECP membership fee, there's no denying that full value has, and still is, being delivered in a very big way.

Spring is Christmas Eve for boaters. The anticipation to get back out on the water, whatever you ride, is heightened by the prospect of a summer season brimming with more on-water memory-making adventures. As always, any contribution to The Port Hole is most welcome. Email your articles and/or photos to me directly at communication-chair@cps-ecp.org or to theporthole@cps-ecp.ca ■



**Canadian Power
and Sail Squadrons**

Published by Authority
of the Board of Directors

Editor-in-Chief
Paul Rellinger

Art Director
Vanessa Schmidt

Graphic Designer
Nour Bawab

Proofreaders
Louise White, SN

Photographer
Don Butt, AP

Published 6 times per year:
February, April, May, June, October,
December, Copy deadline is ten
weeks prior to publication. Edi-
torial copy and correspondence
should be sent to theporthole@cps-ecp.ca

**Canadian Power and Sail Squad-
rons | Escadrilles canadiennes
de plaisance**
26 Golden Gate Court
Toronto, ON M1P 3A5
1-888-CPS-BOAT
F. 416-293-2445
theporthole@cps-ecp.ca
www.cps-ecp.ca

National Office Director
Martin Gangnier

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE CHIEF COMMANDER'S DESK

- by Peter Bolton, Chief Commander, CPS-ECP



CPS-ECP Chief Commander Peter Bolton

SpaceX: I've just finished watching an online stream of the launch of an Italian radar satellite. It was boosted into orbit by a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. After the launch, the first stage booster turned around and landed successfully back at Cape Canaveral. It was the third time that this booster - the rocket's first stage - had done this amazing feat.

The reusability of the booster has greatly reduced the cost of satellite launches with some boosters having flown upwards of ten times. Fifteen years ago this would have seemed impossible; ten years ago it was a possibility but unproven. Now it is normal. In rural areas, consumers can now purchase satellite dishes and receivers that link to the Internet using satellites launched by this process. Huge progress in a short space of time. What has this got to do with CPS-ECP? Well, before the pandemic, all meetings and instruction were carried out face-to-face. We had heard of Zoom and GoToMeeting but we hardly used them. In a few short months, they became the new normal. These changes have not been without difficulty. I have heard that there are those who refuse to learn to use Teams but it is a great communication tool - if we all use it. Like I said, progress.

Pandemic: Eighteen months ago we were told that the pandemic would be over within a year. That was a bit optimistic. But thanks to some amazing scientists, in a very short space of time, we now have vaccines that help to protect us. As an organization, CPS-ECP has adapted. We came into the pandemic with a suite of online courses and, over the last year, these have been developed and improved thanks to our great education department outreach team. With the uncertainty we still live with, our squadrons need to focus on online classes. A recent survey discovered that only 50 squadrons are teaching and close to 80 are not. Our mandate is to teach safe boating and navigation but we still have many refusing to change, possibly because they only believe in classroom teaching or perhaps are too scared to learn something new. When we finally come out of the pandemic, we will be in a new normal. All of

us have to adapt to it. CPS-ECP must continue to adapt as well.

Face-To-Face Meetings: CPS-ECP offers boating safety instruction, as do other organizations, but what we add to our offerings is a social squadron life and membership with benefits. In the early days of the pandemic, that social life was adversely affected by provincial regulations and our own rules prohibiting face-to-face meetings. This has resulted in a membership decline that makes the business of finding bridge members and instructors more difficult. It also reduces our income at a time when salaries have to be paid and bills are increasing. This has heightened the need to sell more classes, be they online or, when possible and safe, in-person. ExCom enacted a temporary ban on face-to-face meetings because of the dramatic rise in infections caused by the COVID-19 omicron variant. Hopefully we will soon return to the previous regimen of regulating our meetings based on provincial guidelines. Infection rates, and health guidance and regulations, are different in each province. They change frequently and quickly.

Online Sharing: I am delighted to report that a number of squadrons have started to offer their experience in online teaching to their neighbouring squadrons. They are showing others how to run an online class or letting an instructor sit in on one of their own classes. Back in 'the old days,' the 'normal' was that squadrons competed with each other, especially those squadrons whose 'territory' overlapped with another. Now we need all the customers we can get. We have to provide products that those customers want - not what we think they should have.

IT Improvements/Special Projects Fund: We are absolutely delighted in the response from squadrons and districts to the request for contributions to the Special Projects Fund. The New Business Plan Committee has selected four projects that we are not able to fund otherwise, and will be seeking approval from ExCom and the board of directors to move forward with them. The projects are IT improvements to the membership renewal process, a new financial dashboard, a RE/RI database and improvements to the national office.

As we move forward in 2022, I wish all members a safe and successful year. ■



1. My complete navigation suite.

EAST ABOUT: FROM PACIFIC TO ATLANTIC BY CANOE

by Bert terHart, Gabriola Island Power and Sail Squadron

It's cold. Not the cold one might experience when first getting out of bed in the morning or perhaps stepping out of a steaming hot shower. Rather the kind of cold that accompanies a driving rain that borders on sleet and a wind that tears at your soaked-through layers. Yes, it's cold all right, and so am I. It takes more than a little mental effort to push aside thoughts that are at best mutinous and focus instead on getting through the next 12 miserable kilometres. Easy enough in a car but not so much slogging down a road covered in snow and slush, with me much the same, carrying 30 kilograms of gear.



Preparation, persistence, and success are all very good neighbours. Bedfellows I would venture. It is to these ends that I am humping a giant rucksack down the road. To the curious and disbelieving stares (and not infrequent jeers) of my fellow travellers I might add. No sane person would think otherwise.

I am preparing myself physically for the challenges that I, and everyone who has come before me faced, will endure as I attempt a solo, cross-Canada canoe trek. It's one of many physical challenges that must be met and as hard as it might be it's only one of many.



2. The packed canoe looking aft.



3. The three paddles I'll be carrying.



4. The canoe cover completely zipped up.

The saying of a thing is easy. The doing, however, is something else entirely. And the doing, the actual physical doing, pales in comparison to the planning.

As a sailor, I know all too well how difficult it is to get off the dock. To actually, irrevocably cast off those last thread-like ties to family, home, and shore. Nearly all adventures, big or small, die a well-talked, poorly planned and badly prepared for death at the dock. If the physical preparation for this trip doesn't kill me, it seems the planning and preparation surely will.

I've been at it now for the better part of a year. Shortly after the completion of my 5 Capes voyage in July 2020, I began to plan for this next adventure. Solo trips of this scope and duration are extremely rare. There's next to no precedent and the problems that must be solved are yours and yours alone.

For me, the most important question has always been how to finish. I can start easily enough. But to finish? Ah, there indeed lies the rub. What do I need to do to finish? It's a very good question and asking good questions generally leads to discovering good answers. Because I'll be on foot for close to 1,000 kilometres, the question boils down to how can I carry, on my back, all that I will need to survive more than seven months in the Canadian bush?

The Canoe

A 40-pound modern-day epoxy composite canoe is about as far removed from birch bark as one can get. One of the first things I set my sights on was getting hold of one of these wonders.

My canoe skills being suspect, I needed a canoe that was

not just light but one that I could effectively wrap around a mid-stream boulder. Seeing one of these wonders unscathed after being nearly doubled while pinned against a giant rock in a tortuous Canadian rapid sealed the deal. Getting it was straightforward. Learning to paddle, pole, portage, line and track the thing, fully loaded or otherwise, was not. Considering the canoe carrying me and my gear will need to travel about 6,500 kilometres up and downstream, on lakes, over dams and even the sea, there is zero room for error.

I've been training with at least six different paddles. Anyone who has paddled for more than 14 hours straight and needs to do the same again the next day needs no convincing that all paddles are not created equal. Mine are custom-made works of art from Canadian manufacturers who have been at it for decades, if not generations. I've got paddles, and spares for flat water, white water and big water.

Canoes don't like going upstream any more than Dutch river barges like going upwind. Sadly, I'll be travelling upstream on the Fraser, Columbia, Winnipeg, and French rivers. To do that, I figure I will do what the Voyageurs did. I will pole upstream whenever I can. To do that, I'm bringing along a 10-foot 2-inch diameter bamboo pole. Down from 12 feet and up from 8 feet, this one weighs next to nothing, can double as a ridge line and is stout enough to discourage uninvited camp guests.

The Portaging

I am dreading the portages. Thus I can be found portaging myself and my gear here on Gabriola nearly every day. People so far have only stopped and stared at me harnessed to the canoe as I tow it down the road. I figure soon enough somebody's going to ask me what I'm doing. No matter what



my answer, the response I'm sure will be a universal. "Are you nuts?", followed closely by "Why?", invariably ending with "Better you than me". In their defense, being dragged downhill by a canoe on a two-wheeled cart isn't something you see every day.

Portaging myself implies walking with a pack. A very heavy pack. One pack for clothes and sundries, another for food and shelter, and a third for bulky items that can't easily be carried by hand. That turns every one kilometre portaged into five kilometres traveled.

Over the past six months, I've been experimenting with at least five different packs, ranging from the traditional Duluth style canoe pack to a high-tech carbon ultra-light hunting pack. I'll be using a combination of the traditional and high-tech. Unfortunately, they're not designed to be in continuous use for 200-plus days, so what is going to survive the whole trip is a question that is unanswered at this point.

A modern composite canoe is easily enough portaged. Just hoist the thing up onto the back of your neck and start walking. Towing it fully loaded down the Trans Canada is a little more involved. After some spectacularly unsuccessful attempts at creating or repurposing old harnesses, I've settled on the technology that trans-Arctic and Antarctic adventurers use. I'll be using a custom-made towing harness and pulks. Yes, pulks. The fully loaded canoe and I will be literally and figuratively rigidly attached at the hips.

Lining and Tracking

Lining and tracking respectively refer to floating a canoe downstream and pulling one up. Lining is hard on the canoe, but easy on the liner. Tracking is hard on the tracker, easy on the canoe. When I say hard, I mean grinding your way upstream in any way possible kind of hard. It's not just exhausting. It's more often than not soul-sucking misery.

The first seven days tracking up the Fraser River may very well be the hardest seven days of the whole trip. The only way to prepare for this kind of abuse is to push the envelope of what one considers physically possible as often as you dare. Thus 30-kilometre hikes with a 30 kilogram pack, in 30 knot winds, with three inches of snow and slush on the road and more on the trails.

The Route

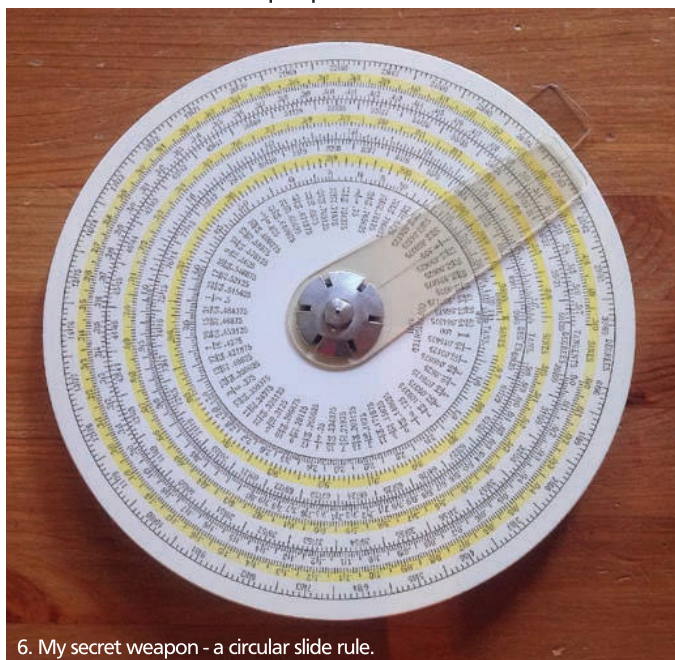
I'll be following traditional routes used by Indigenous peoples for centuries. These are the same routes that the Voyageurs, explorers and cartographers used to traverse Canada from coast to coast to coast. They are well-known and, at least in parts, well-traveled. Much, however, remains unchanged.

For the greater part of this adventure, I'll be traveling country that is quintessentially Canadian, passing locations and landmarks that would be easily recognizable to travelers centuries ago. Starting at Steveston, BC on the South Arm of the Fraser River and ending at Big Shippagan Lighthouse, NB on the Atlantic Coast, the route is daunting and ambitious but not impossible. Mike Ranta, with his trusty mutt Spitzii along for company and bear patrol, did this route solo in 2014.

Although I will not be using any electronic navigational tools or aids, I will have maps. My whole route has been broken down into 120 11x17 double-sided Rite-In-The-Rain laser printed maps. Each day is basically one sheet. I used the Canadian Geological Survey's publicly available topographic map data and an open-source GIS program to produce topographic maps with a lat-long grid as opposed to the standard UTM grid. Each map will double as a celestial navigation plotting sheet.

I'll dead reckon with the topographical maps as one would do on a nautical chart. The sextant I'll use to confirm my position. Incredibly, all of Canada was initially mapped with a sextant and some of those maps remain the best available well into the 20th century. The Canada-US border is where it is because surveyors figured it was there using a sextant.

The issue of a usable horizon is easily solved by using an artificial one. I've got two along for the ride: the standard floating puddle of liquid artificial horizon and a high-tech Cassens and Plath artificial bubble horizon. The bubble is not as accurate as the simple puddle but it allows me to take



sights at night. It also requires me to very carefully calculate the errors introduced in the sextant readings by the bubble horizon itself.

The question in celestial navigation is not where you are but what time is it? Good maps and better landmarks can help solve that problem. It's very easy to calculate watch error when you know exactly where you are. Unlike an empty ocean, devoid of anything resembling a signpost, I will not have any issue figuring what time it is.

The Clothing

I have given more thought to what I'm going to wear than I have to any other aspect of this trip. More than food, water or the canoe. Even more than the route itself. Barring an accident, the clothes on my back (or lack thereof) can put an end to the trip, or me, in 24 hours or less. Considering that whatever I bring must work in wildly varying conditions - from Rocky Mountain snow and ice to blistering prairie heat - and that I've got to carry it all, getting what I'm going to wear right was at the very top of my list.

I was very careful about preserving at least one dry set of clothes on my circumnavigation. Keeping clothes dry was no small comfort and more than worth the effort. I'll do the same on this trip. I have a dedicated set of clothes that will only see the inside of my tent. Other than that, I have a single lightweight merino wool base-layer, a light weight fleece mid-layer and a Gore-Tex outer layer. I'll also carry a lightweight Gore-Tex shell and a duck canvas anorak.

The remainder of my clothing includes one pair of waterproof gloves, three pairs of socks, three pairs of underwear, a merino short-sleeve t-shirt, a merino long-sleeve t-shirt, two pairs of pants, two pairs of shorts, hiking boots, wading boots and two hats. Slave to fashion that I am, it's all black, green or brown. My wardrobe, as plain as it is, cost more than double the canoe.

The Food

At basically one pound per day, the most food I can carry is about 28 days' worth, including an approximate 25 percent safety factor. It will be a challenge to get enough calories into me to fuel the work needed to average at least 50 kilometres a day. If I meet anyone on this trip, it's most likely going to be in a restaurant with me talking between mouthfuls.

Luckily, I'm not a fussy eater. I know exactly what I'll be eating at every meal, every day of the week, for the whole trip. I imagine the banality of the meal plan would be a self-ascribed torture but I'm just fine with oatmeal for breakfast, lunch and dinner as long as I can get enough of it.

I've created a 10-day meal plan and shopping list that will allow me to replenish supplies virtually anywhere in Canada. At any one time, I'll not carry more than 30 days' worth of food. To save on weight, I won't be carrying more than 10 days' food for most of the trip. To make it all easy, I'll replen-

ish these in 10-day increments. I have one shopping list that I only need double or triple as required.

I plan to cook almost entirely on a tiny backpacking wood stove. I'll be carrying two just in case. If the 'just in case' turns into an emergency, I'm bringing along a butane-powered miniature stove capable of boiling 1.5 litres of water in 150 seconds.

Relying on a wood stove means that I must be able to be able start a fire no matter the conditions. A ferrocerium rod is absolutely foolproof. It works when completely soaked and fires off sparks in excess of 6,000 F. Matches won't be making the trip. Dryer lint, by the way, makes for incredible tinder. I've been scrounging it for months.

The Shelter

Dyneema, more commonly known to us boaters as Amsteel, is a modern day miracle ranking up there, at least as far as this trip is concerned, with carbon Kevlar epoxy canoes and Gore-Tex fabrics. Not only does it make incomparable light-air spinnaker sheets - it also happens to make extraordinarily light, strong and waterproof tents. In fact, it's just about perfect for tents.

The tent I'll be taking was the winner after field testing four over the course of this past winter. The matter was settled after I left it pitched outside in a three-day deluge. Bone dry on the inside, I was shocked to find the fly nearly the same after a couple of shakes. The nylon and silnylon tents that were pitched alongside took the better part of two days to dry out while hanging over a balcony inside the house. Last but not least, it weighs in at 800 grams, as in just under two pounds.

Putting It All Together

Ask yourself what you would need to travel 7,500 kilometres, traveling only under your own steam by foot and canoe, carrying everything required on your back, or pulling it behind you, for at least one thousand of those kilometres, over seven months through a Canadian spring, summer and fall. If you're feeling a tiny bit overwhelmed, you're in good company.

My thinking has led me to realize that no detail is too small. From what kind of boots to wear (I've tried at least four different kinds) to what kind of cord I should bring (nylon, polyester, Para cord or dyneema), to paddles (bent, straight, laminated or carved), to pencils (mechanical, traditional or write-in-the-rain), I have been consumed with trying to figure it all out. My experience has also led me to realize that I won't have time to get everything exactly right. There will be things I've either forgotten or neglected, either ignored or given short shrift to. To get it all perfect would mean I would never leave.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) was absolutely correct when he said "God is in the details." As was William Blake (1757-1827) when he said "Execution is the chariot of genius." Our job, be it sailing, adventuring or just plain living, is striking the balance. ■

A HEARTY WELCOME TO NEW BOATING FAMILIES... AND SOME GOOD ADVICE

- by Jeff Evans, Sarnia Power and Sail Squadron



For Cecily and me, the last two boating summers have been the best we've had since purchasing our first boat in 1984. This seems in contradiction to the chilling effects of the COVID pandemic but the resulting limitations have actually improved our holiday experiences.

In 2020, we cruised to the North Channel where 18 of 21 nights were spent distanced from others at remote anchorages. To select 18 anchorages, we ventured further afield into bays and inlets unknown to us. In fact, after many years cruising the North Channel, we discovered our "best yet" anchorage that will receive a return visit this year.

In 2021, we embarked on an eight-week cruise on the Trent and Rideau canals from Goderich to Ottawa and back. Along the way, when not anchored, we mostly stayed at the lock moorings. The beautiful facilities were quiet and it was easy to limit physical contact with others. Cecily even managed to get her second vaccine on an overnight stop in Ottawa.

One of the delightful surprises both summers was meeting the many new boaters who found their way onto our waterways. Everywhere people have taken to new outdoor activities, including boating. It was great to see the resurgence in boating enthusiasts but it was soon obvious there has been a prevalence of hasty purchasing decisions from a shrinking pool of available boats. The result was vessels purchased with maintenance issues, not operational or not even seaworthy.

Many keen new boat owners had forgone the essential process of getting a proper professional vessel survey done prior to their purchase.

At our home port, new neighbours and their recently acquired used boats arrived. Most often, the boats had various existing issues that needed to be addressed. Professional marine services were overloaded with operational restrictions and demand, so repairs were either delayed or attempted by friends and neighbours. The new boat owners' enthusiasm was replaced by frustration as the costs and delays piled up. In preparation for the 2022 season, I'm sure many of the newly acquired boats are now booked for overdue critical repairs.

In addition, given their haste, many new boaters had yet to take any formal training to prepare for their first season. We observed boat operators lacking essential basic skills in boat safety, vessel handling, navigation and maintenance that resulted in various unfortunate incidents. I hope many have since taken CPS-ECP related and other courses to improve their skills. If not, there is still time to do so prior to the coming season. As well, consider on-the-water boat handling training. A few dollars spent on training could save hundreds in dock rash.

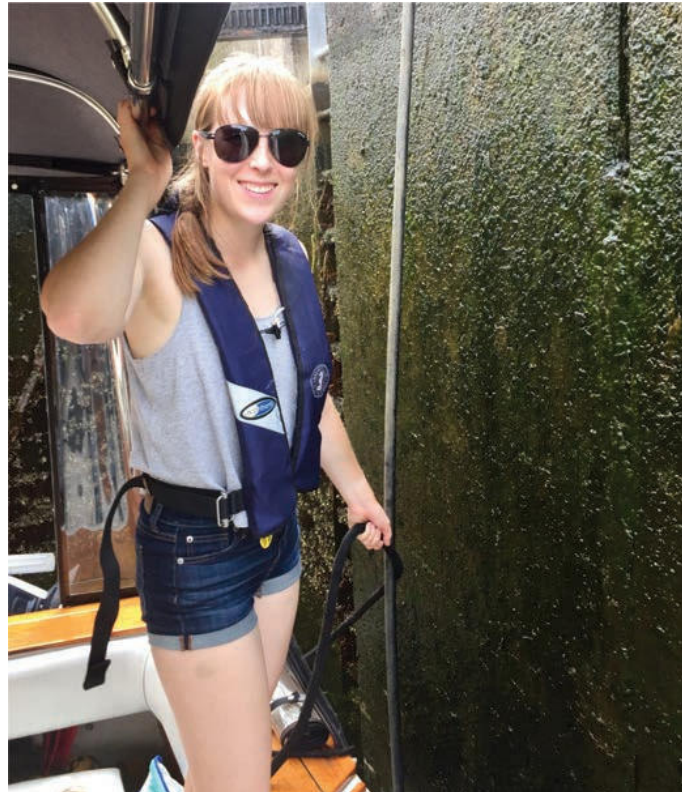
If you are considering a boat purchase or are new to boating, Cecily and I welcome you. This has been a lifelong passion for us that we believe all others should experience. We look forward to cruising with you, hanging out at anchorages and

sharing stories of past adventures.

To get us all there safely, I respectfully offer some quick advice to new boaters to maximize your enjoyment, and keep you and yours safe:

- Get a professional vessel survey prior to purchase. Knowing ahead of time any issues that may arise could impact your decision to buy and the price you are willing to pay.
- Even if you have already purchased your boat without a survey, a follow-up survey will assist you to prioritize any repairs. As well, after a certain vessel age, most insurance companies want a survey done every five years to reinsure.
- Get your Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC). This is required by law to operate a boat.
- If your boat is equipped with a VHF radio, get your Restricted Operator Card, Maritime (ROC(M)). This too is required by law to operate a VHF radio.
- Make sure that you familiarize yourself with the Safe Boating Guide and the safety equipment required on board. Always follow all safety requirements such as the use of engine compartment blowers each time you start your vessel.
- Get a free Vessel Courtesy Check. A CPS-ECP volunteer will assist you dockside to review the required safety equipment on your boat and provide recommendations to resolve any gaps.
- Take formal courses from CPS-ECP or others, either online or in person. Whether it's Operator Card acquisition, or VHF radio, navigation, boat handling, maintenance or safety procedure related, there are many avenues to improve your skills throughout the year. Also consider on-the-water training to get one-on-one hands-on expertise with your specific boat.

This summer, Cecily and I plan to float about Northern Georgian Bay and back to the North Channel. If you see Boldly Go at anchor behind some island, come say hello. We look forward to you joining our extended boating family. ■



APPLY TO BECOME PART OF THE CPS-ECP BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY APRIL 15 2022

– by Chuck Beall, Nominations Chair, CPS-ECP



APPLY TODAY

The role of a Director of CPS-ECP (the Corporation) is a serious responsibility. The Directors shall manage or supervise the management of the activities and affairs of the Corporation (CPS-ECP). You will be expected to assist in determining the direction and operations of CPS-ECP. Many items will be required to remain confidential. You will be expected to act in the best interest of CPS-ECP, and you may find conflicts between these 'best interests' and the interests of your own Squadron or District. The list of experiences, skills and attributes which will contribute to the selection of the best possible CPS-ECP Director candidates, is not an all-inclusive list! Scan the QR code to see the list.

If you're interested in becoming a board member but have some questions, send me an email, Chuck Beall at pcc@cps-ecp.org.

And, as always, if you think someone else would make a great director, encourage him or her to apply.

Scan this QR code with your smart phone camera and get to the nomination page on our website directly. ■



CPS-ECP EDUCATION KEY TO REALIZING CROSS-OCEAN DREAM

- by Richard Larivière, SN, CPS-ECP



My family had a cottage on the shore of a small lake in Québec where we spent our summers playing on the water. We had a small runabout to water ski with but also a canoe and a rowing boat.

As an adult, I thought I knew how to manoeuvre a small boat until I bought my own in 2000. I saw the rivers and lakes surrounding Montreal as an interesting playground, that is until I realized that there were buoys and channels to navigate around.

I subsequently came across an ad for boating courses in the local newspaper and there I went, not knowing what I was getting into. I was stunned to see how much I needed to learn and how much information was available to me. I had no idea what CPS-ECP was nor did I know that the teachers were volunteers.

A year later, with my boating course certificate in hand, I navigated the St-Lawrence River up to Kingston, up the Rideau Canal and back to Montreal via the Ottawa River. A chart on my lap and a GPS in my hand, I was confident I would know my way around safely.

I went on to learn more about navigation by taking advanced courses up to the very challenging Celestial Navigation course. During that same time, I was recruited to become a teacher at the West-Island Squadron and taught many courses for several years.

In my oldest dreams I always wanted to sail on the ocean. In 2005, I bought an old sailboat and tested my abilities, and my desire, to effectively sail on Lake Champlain, an hour south of Montreal. I was hooked. I knew that this is what I wanted to do - sail the Atlantic Ocean to Europe.

I prepared and upgraded my boat for the crossing. I saved money for many years as I continued to prepare myself for the trip.

I was not alone in that plan. Six fellow boaters and CPS-ECP course graduates from the West-Island Squadron had the same plan. In total we were three boats - Indian Summer 1, Viewfinder and Long Reach - leaving Montreal for the Azores.

We had all taken CPS-ECP weather courses and we knew the basics. Still, we needed a good weather window before setting sail on the ocean. We relied on the advice of our weather course teacher to give us the go-ahead to leave port.

In the spring of 2012, Viewfinder left from Halifax while I, aboard Indian Summer 1, left St-Paul on the Richelieu River to meet with Long Reach in New York City. We all set sail at the beginning of June towards the Azores.

During this first leg of the trip, we were able to communicate with our weather guru via ham radio. He kept us informed about the changes in weather but responsibility for navigation remained ours.

After the Azores, we had different plans and schedules but we eventually reunited in Portugal. My trip went from Portugal to Madeira, Canaries and another transatlantic trek to the Caribbean Islands. In the spring of 2013, I sailed solo from La Martinique to New York City on my way back home.

In retrospect, the education that I received from CPS-ECP along with my own readings contributed to a safe and enjoyable trip. We had no accidents, we completed the trip under budget and we had a great time.

Now that I am retired, I am planning to re-do the same trip in 2022 but this time without any schedules.

You do not have to have the same ambitions as we did to take CPS-ECP courses. If doing so simply gives you the confidence that you are doing the right things on the water, it is well worth it. ■



COVER PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

If you have a great photo that you would like to consider for The Port Hole's next issue, please send it to us theporthole@cps-ecp.ca

Images must be uncompressed, original size and a minimum of 3 MB.



Photo by Don Butt – Nanaimo Regatta during NYC race, 2011.