

## Commander's Report for 2024 AGM

This has been a challenging year for the Squadron with many uncertainties and stressors, coming off a successful period when we garnered awards at the National level, and were enthusiastically pursuing our fundamental mission of “promoting boating safety by creating a safe boating ethic”. Those awards continued, with Bob Wood being awarded the Howard G. Peck Volunteer of the Year Award for 2023 and the previous year's winner, Agathe Gaulin representing the Squadron at the National Conference in Windsor and agreeing to serve on the national Marketing Committee as our organisation moved through to the conclusion of its rebranding exercise. Now we are CanBoat/NautiSavoir how do we move forward, with fewer members and increasing competition from other organisations?

Elaine Pearce achieved her Life membership status following years of devotion to the Squadron and more recently in her role as Membership officer.

Under Agathe's leadership in Education, we continued with our programmes as one of only about 30 squadrons across the country offering courses, seminars and workshops across a range of topics. Highlights of local significance were the Spring 2023 and 2024 series of Wednesday evening workshops ( thanks to Sean Lewis, John Bullas for their help in instruction) in collaboration with The Gabriola Recreation Society, the second Youth Boating Camp in May 2023, the Open House and Marine Swap Meet in October, a multitude of ROC(M) and PCOC courses taught by Agathe and, recently, the new Basic Navigation and Boat Handling online course which combines and updates the Boating 2 and 3 courses. One member of our Squadron, John Scott, has recently completed this course and will receive his certificate at the AGM.

RVCCs continued in 2023 (Thank you Bob, Ivan, Paul and Gary) and are ongoing in 2024 with a move away from a concentrated dockside blitz to advertising and a continuous programme from the May long weekend to Labour Day. Bob Wood has passed on the torch, and we thank him for his many years of carrying this programme, and Ivan Bulic for agreeing to take over as co-ordinator.

Distribution continues of the Boater's Guide for Gabriolans as our ongoing response to the loss of many of the Silva Bay facilities. This booklet will be updated again later this year and is a popular and useful resource for local boaters.

Production of the e-newsletter has been taken over by Debbie Erdos, and she has published several lively and readable editions during the year. Sincere thanks to Don Butt for all of his continuing efforts in helping the transition.

We have managed to maintain a microsite on the main CPS-ECP website with events and course offerings and have used 'The Sounder' and social media to extend our reach. Gabriola Recreation Society have also helped significantly with registration and a great venue for the workshops

We have been able to store Li'l Gabe undercover and recently the 18' day-sailer 'Anderida' (Thank you Jude for the accommodation and space!). Plans are underway to work on maintenance/restoration of both boats, and thanks are due to Jean-Pierre Van Praet for his efforts to build a team for 'Anderida'.

Jean-Pierre has also continued to co-ordinate and schedule Squadron and other volunteers to monitor the Hakai Institute's Light Trap at Page's dock as part of the Sentinel project monitoring the Salish Sea for Dungeness Crab early in their life cycle. Many thanks to Jean-Pierre, who has also picked up secretarial duties in the absence of a full-time officer but will be leaving Gabriola soon to move closer to family in Quebec. I have benefited enormously from his calm and wise counsel and wish him and Danielle well.

In a substitution for the Past Commander's Award we were able to present Jean-Pierre with a Gabriola themed print by Tony Grove.

I am standing down as Commander and will in fact swap roles with Agathe Gaulin. I hope that we will be able to continue with all of our programmes, so please continue to support our efforts. Our small size means that we need to be a streamlined and efficient organisation, and the vision of what we are is reflected in the National statement of "a committed community of experienced boaters inspiring others to adopt a safe boating attitude through education and training".

Let's make that happen.

Respectfully submitted

Nigel Wells

CanBoat Gabriola

## **EDUCATIONAL OFFICER REPORT – 2024 Annual general meeting of Gabriola Power and Sail Squadron**

During this past fiscal year, which started April 1<sup>st</sup> '23 and ended at the end of March, 2024, our Squadron continued to offer as many CPS courses and workshops as was asked for by our Boating clientele. Our Gabriola Island population continues to transition from long-time residents to relative newcomers and many of these new Islanders arrive with newly purchased boats, both power and sail. Most are eager to get their certifications (PCOC & Roc-M) and further their boating knowledge. Because of this, there is an ongoing need for the CPS-ECP courses.

2023 started with our **Spring series of Wednesday evening workshops**. The series started in March and I reported on the attendance in those workshops in last year's report. Last year's series was in collaboration with the *Gabriola Recreation Society*, with sessions held in their Office/classroom space on North Road. This venue is perfect for our course offerings as we can store our large screen TV there, tables and chairs are set-up in advance, and the promotion done by the Rec Society helps put the word out to Gabriolans. Starting in April '23, we offered:

- **Boating 2 – Beyond PCOC** study sessions continued till April 12<sup>th</sup> instructed by Agathe Gaulin:
- **VHF Radio operator's Certificate** (Roc-M) Study sessions held on April 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, with Exam on the 26<sup>th</sup> instructed by Agathe Gaulin: 20 participants, 18 wrote the Exam and passed.
- **Pleasure Craft Operator Card** (PCOC) Study sessions held on May 3<sup>rd</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, with Exam on the 10<sup>th</sup> instructed by Agathe Gaulin: 10 participants, 9 wrote Exam and passed.
- **West Coast Weather for Boaters** by John Bullas, held May 17<sup>th</sup>: 14 participants.

At this time, the Spring '24 instructional program, comprised of four Workshops, a one-day Boating 1 (PCOC) and a two-evening Maritime Radio course, held in April and May, has already ended. Attendance at these was again good.

As reported last year, your SEO was contacted to offer the Roc-M course to 2 high schools; one in Qualicum Beach and the other in Parksville. The students are in Outdoor education classes that include kayaking in open waters and the VHF radio course was considered a basic skill and certification to obtain. Last year, Agathe travelled to the Parksville ROAMS school to offer a full-day course on April 18<sup>th</sup>, immediately followed by the Exam. All 11 students passed the Exam. In 2024, this School again requested this course and Agathe returned to instruct the Radio course to a class of 12, again on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

On May 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 we organized the second annual **Youth Boating Camp** offered over 2 days at the Gabriola Community Hall. These 2 days were professional development days for the teachers at the Elementary School so children were free from classes. 12 youth aged 9 to 13 participated. Instructional activity stations were led by: Dave Corman, Rob Erdos, Sean Lewis, Jean-Pierre VanPraet, Agathe Gaulin, Maureen Connelly, Nigel Wells. Supporting roles filled by: Georgette Duhaime, Sharon McDaniels, Leslie Hazeldine, Jude Briscoe, and Elaine Pearce. 10 youth wrote the PCOC exam on Friday afternoon and all passed.

After a 4-month hiatus from courses, and the Bridge having decided that there would not be a Fall session of courses and workshops, a few CPS members felt it important to organize an event for

boaters on the Thanksgiving weekend. Your SEO, mainly supported by Jude Briscoe and Georgette Duhaime, organized the Gabriola Power & Sail Squadron **Open House** and **MARINE SWAP MEET** on Saturday October 7<sup>th</sup> at the Gabriola Community Hall (basement). The Open House, from 11 am - 3 pm, consisted of course materials displays and the opportunity to test one's skills on the Boating Simulator. The Marine Gear sale occurred concurrently and saw half a dozen sellers display and sell their excess gear. There were also a few tables of charts, books & other gear donated to our Squadron; articles sold as a fundraiser for the Squadron.

The **Self-study Radio operator's courses** remain an interesting option for students who cannot attend in-person courses. Students register online, take the courses entirely online and, when they feel ready to write the exam, they set up a time and date with one of our Registered Examiners, either Agathe Gaulin or Nigel Wells, and they write the exam using our *GoToMeeting* web conferencing technology. Students study at their own pace and most of them do very well in the final exams. During this past 12-month cycle, 3 Gabriola/Nanaimo students obtained their Roc-M in this manner, 3 persons from elsewhere in British Columbia, 1 from Alberta, and 2 from Saskatchewan.

For the period between April 1st 2023 and the end of March 2024, Gabriola Squadron has administered **38 Roc-M exams** to students and **19 PCOC Exams**.

Two other Education department initiatives which started in January of 2024:

- Offering an online **Basic Navigation & Boat Handling** (previously known as Boating 2 & 3) course with weekly GoTo "check-ins" for 12 weeks. Weekly check-ins were facilitated by Nigel Wells with 3 students. This course is being tested for new content and your SEO participated in several *Teams* meetings with the National programmers to ensure Instructors understand how the Moodle platform works, managing student marks, etc.
- Sean Lewis led a delegation of 3 of us Gabriola CPS instructors to the **Western Maritime Institute** (WMI) for a presentation by their staff of potential uses of their simulators for Pleasure craft operators. The program they propose is quite in depth and we gave them feedback as to a more easily marketed program. It is hoped that such an initiative by the WMI can be offered to the mid-Island population as a hands-on course to supplement CPS-ECP theory courses.

This past year, your SEO took it upon herself to liaise with our new e-newsletter Editor, Debbie Erdos to ensure adequate content for *Scuttlebutt*. Articles were written and solicited from other Squadron members, a column of articles for sale was started, and a call went out for "no-longer-used" navigational tools, charts, Gov't publications, guidebooks and safety gear; anything that could be used as teaching tools or by new boaters. Many generous contributions were made. A special THANK-YOU to Oliver Woolcock and Sharon Snell who donated boxes of supplies after selling their boat.

In the Fall of 2023, I was tasked with representing the Gabriola Squadron at the **CPS-ECP national Conference in Windsor**, Ontario. This conference is a great opportunity to truly understand the workings and functioning of our National organization. I attended Education, Membership, Marketing, Communications and Commander meetings, the annual General Meeting, luncheons & dinners to connect with other participants and met individually with several staff members and long-time members who could explain the inner workings of this large organization. One follow-up to this

Conference is that I was asked to participate in the national Marketing committee and sub-committee in charge of our re-branding.

In 2024, with Easter and the Spring break holidays being at the end of March, we decided we would not hold the *Youth Boating Camp* offered over 2 days at the Gabriola Community Hall. One main reason is that most of our volunteers are grand-parents and they advised us that they would be traveling or otherwise busy with grand-children on the dates we might have organized this Camp. We've promised parents the Camp would again be held in 2025 so there is already a call-out for volunteers to help out!

In closing, I would like to reiterate that we have an extraordinary amount of instructional and boating expertise on this Island and I am committed to expand our pool of "instructional staff". Facilitating a workshop or study session or Youth Camp activity station, using the tools we have accumulated and the instructional aids supplied by CPS National, is a great way to "test" one's mettle instructing. In this next year, your SEO has accepted to transfer over Educational Officer duties to Nigel Wells, to take on the Commander duties. This will mean less instructing time and more Squadron planning and management time. It is expected the transition will not affect our Educational program and peripheral activities. Though we are a small group of dedicated boating safety and proficiency instructors, we plan on keeping our Squadron "on the map" as an active Teaching Squadron! New boaters are asking for courses and Seminars to build and upgrade their boating and navigation skills. We must continue to deliver these to our Island boaters.

Respectfully submitted  
Agathe Gaulin  
Gabriola Squadron Educational Officer

