

DARIEN SAIL & POWER SQUADRON  
DISTRICT 2, UNITED STATES POWER SQUADRONS®

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## It Became the Best Boat

{the first in a series}

— *By Fred Elliott*

“Oh wow! Now *this* is a *Boat!*”

I remember my Dad’s enthusiasm when he saw this 29’ Trojan cabin cruiser, which was for sale. I was 5 years old at the time. While the details surrounding why we were at “Terra Mar” (now known as Saybrook Point Marina, in Westbrook, CT) have long since evaporated, *“this”* boat would become our true first chapter in boating.

As a kid, my dad spent summers in Matunuck, RI, where he had a small runabout. This is where his love of being on the water was born. As a newlywed and a father, his leisure-time passion was golf. A gifted athlete and a salesman, golf was the perfect sport for him.

Every Saturday and Sunday he’d head off to the club to play. I’m not sure if it was my Mom, not an athlete by any measure, who got him to change, or his own conscience, but he realized we needed a family activity we could all enjoy together.

### Preface: Skimmer II

She was a 22’ Jersey Skiff, a wooden lapstrake hull with a small bow deck, a covered helm area and an open cockpit. One big blue engine was under the large box that took up much of the cockpit space. I learned what “Vee bunks” are, and underneath one of them was a toilet! On our one and only sea trial with the boatyard dealer, my Dad was doing some sort of maneuver and hit one of the channel markers. The dealer smiled while



22’ Jersey Ski — Not Skimmer II

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## The Bridge

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## Paper Charts

**All traditional NOAA paper nautical charts will be canceled by January 2025.**

NOAA has already started to cancel individual charts and will shut down all production and maintenance of traditional paper nautical charts and the associated raster chart products and services by January 2025.

See [Farewell to Traditional Nautical Charts](#), [Cancelled Charts](#), and [Pending Chart Cancellations](#).

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rolling his eyes, as my Dad said, “I’m just getting the feel of her.”

The boat was moored in New Rochelle, NY. I don’t recall why we voyaged to Terra Mar, but I do remember that we stopped for gas. Many times. I also remember my Dad looking at charts frequently (“these are not maps” I was told), and using binoculars. I don’t ever recall him looking at a map when he was lost while driving a car.

My Mom drove to Terra Mar, where there was also a hotel and a pool, both more favorable than sleeping while crammed into a vee-bunk with no cool air and no bathroom to speak of. I noticed she only came on the boat if the weather was perfect, which included bright, sunny skies and calm water; the latter meant she rarely came with us.

### Chapter I: *Skimmer III* is born



Skimmer III

When my Dad set his eyes on this 29’ Trojan with the orange-lettered “For Sale” sign, he immediately got excited. “Wow!” he said as he stepped aboard. “There’s so much room!”

When he went down below (I learned that was like going downstairs at home) he sounded just like me, a 6-year old kid; “A Stove! An ice box! A table to eat at, which becomes a bed at night! A real head!” I must admit, that last one really puzzled me, until he told me what it was. From my perspective, it all looked pretty neat to me, and the vee bunks were definitely much larger than ours. This boat had a much bigger, bright red engine, a “Fireball” if I recall correctly, under it’s box. “A 60 gallon gas tank! We can cruise for hours!” my Dad exclaimed.

What I learned mostly over the next few boating seasons was lots of swear-words and phrases that I was never allowed to say. It took but a few rains to discover that the boat “leaked like a f\_\_ing sieve.” Even a heavy fog left water drops on the dinette table!

Converting the dinette into a bed or back to a table was always a great source for new vocabulary. Nothing went as smoothly as when “the guy” at Terra Mar did it. Invariably, my Dad broke into a huge sweat when working the dinette. And the head was “too damn small.”

But he was, and we became, passionate about boating. Every weekend (unless it was raining) we would be on Long Island Sound. Fishing. Water skiing. Entertaining friends. Swimming. Early Saturday and Sunday mornings, my Dad made sandwiches for everyone (bologna and liverwurst with mustard was his favorite, a slice of cheese if he wanted to impress our guests). He mass-produced them!

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Teak. *Skimmer III* had teak decks. While they were part of the glamour that caught his eye, heaven forbid you ever spilled anything on them. Potato chips were banned! Suntan oil? Either put it on with gloves and throw them away or scrub your hands thoroughly after applying.

That Fireball engine was another source of emotional extremes. It had a mind of its own; almost any time my Dad and I went out on *Skimmer III*, we got towed back into harbor. Invariably, the Fireball flamed out on us when we were without Mom or other guests. It was nice to know fellow boaters were so helpful, offering us a tow...frequently!

What I noticed was that the bow was level with the stern. There was no rise, no shape to the bow, just the hull coming together. All the other boats had an increase in height from the water line and there was a shape to push the water away from the boat. We would bounce through waves and get soaked in spray. And so would the vee bunks and dinette.

The cumulative and crowning adventure of *Skimmer III* was a planned voyage to Cape Cod. Cape Cod! Hundreds of miles away by car! And my Dad wants to do this by boat?!? I guess we had gone a few weeks without a mishap so Dad's optimism and confidence were growing profusely. His crew would be me (now 7 years old) and two of his boyhood friends. I don't recall any of the planning that went into this voyage other than "Don't worry, honey. I'll call at each port and you and the girls can drive up on the day we expect to arrive." Mom not being with us was a bad omen....

I also don't remember where we were when we ran into some choppy water. We hadn't stopped for gas, so I'm guessing maybe close to Fisher's Island in the eastern end of the Sound. Whatever, after about 15 minutes of bouncing through 2'-3' waves I felt seasick and went below. Incidentally, this would be the only time I would ever contract "sea-sickness." I stretched out on the cushioned dinette seat, because the vee-bunks were leaking so much from the spray as we pushed on. Then it started to rain. Heavily. I dozed off, thanks to feeling so lethargic. I was awakened by my Dad's frantic shouts of "We have to anchor! The engine just died!"

I got up, looked out and was horrified to see how big the waves were. They seemed like mountains and were far apart, unlike the 'chop' we had started in. Now we went up, over the top and down. Until that red Fireball stopped.

Uncle Kent responded to my Dad's command, grabbed the bimini-top strap and started to walk towards the bow on the narrow deck. A wave spun us, and Uncle Kent was thrown into reverse, still clutching that strap, landing square into a deck chair. "Nice to be here!" I heard him yell. Humor was desperately needed. He then jumped up and went down below, to the bow hatch, which he opened and tossed the anchor overboard.

I felt ill. I went back to the dinette and passed out. When I awoke, it was calm, evening was setting in, and the adults were drinking Schaefer beer. I distinctly remember the expression of joyful relief and exhaustion on each of their faces, especially my dad's.

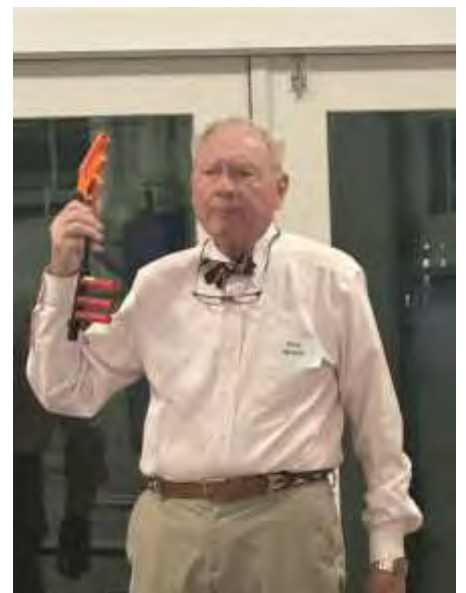
We got another boat before the next season began.



### **DSPS needs your help with Squadron Communications**

If you have experience in any of the following areas (or are willing to learn) and are willing to take on some responsibility for helping your Squadron, please let us know by email to [DSPSCT@Gmail.com](mailto:DSPSCT@Gmail.com)

- Sending email to DSPS members and monitoring the DSPS Gmail account
- Keeping the DSPS website Events page and Calendar up to date
- Producing *The Trident* (using Microsoft Publisher) on a regular (quarterly) basis
- Updating the DSPS Facebook and Instagram accounts when events or activities warrant
- Rewriting the DSPS website to conform with modern web standards (a very large job, for experts only)



DSPS presented a successful Basic Boating Course at Noroton Yacht Club — everyone passed!





## Procedure for DSPTS Cruises (and raft-ups)

Dear Darien Sail and Power Squadron members,

**The Port Jeff cruise has been re-scheduled for Saturday, July 13<sup>th</sup>.**

I encourage you, please, to let me know if you are planning to go on any of these trips, especially the cruises to Port Washington, Captain's Cove, Huntington Lighthouse, and Port Jeff. Boats are boats, we all understand that statement; if you are thinking of going to any of these cruises, **let me know**. If you don't have a boat but want to go, **let me know**; we'll try to find a boat for you!

July 20 and August 17 are raft-ups in Greenwich Cove, with our friends in the Greenwich Squadron. They start at noon and run "all afternoon," so you may arrive and depart as you please.

Port Jefferson July 13<sup>th</sup>, there is the town marina, the Port Jefferson Yacht Club, and Danford's marina for places to tie up. Moorings are also available. Within easy walking distance is the quaint, historic village of Port Jefferson with its array of shops and eateries. Entering the harbor on either side are well protected anchorage areas, the portside sand dunes being a favorite.

Port Washington July 27<sup>th</sup> (following Boat/Camp) will be a "Dine & Dock" day, hopefully at "Louie's!!"

August 25<sup>th</sup>, Captain's Cove, Bridgeport. It's like an amusement park on the waterfront! Dock, dine, let the kids have some fun on the rides and games available!

August 31, the Huntington Lighthouse Musicfest, live music begins at 11:00 AM and lasts until 10:00 PM. This event is a large anchorage or raft-up with bands! Lots of them!

As events get closer, a suggested "float plan" and more details will be sent to those expressing interest in the journeys. Let's have some fun together on the water!

Row on!

Fred Elliott: [elliottfc.07@gmail.com](mailto:elliottfc.07@gmail.com)



## **Raft-ups and Cruises!**

<b>When?</b>	July 13, July 20, July 27, August 17, August 25, August 31
<b>Where?</b>	July 13 Port Jeff July 20 Greenwich Cove July 27 Port Washington August 17 Greenwich Cove August 25 Captain's Cove, Bridgeport August 31 Huntington Lighthouse
<b>Time?</b>	July 13 Arrive at Port Jeff by 11:00 am July 20 Noon departure to Greenwich July 27 TBD August 17 Noon departure to Greenwich August 25 Arrival at Bridgeport around 11:00 am August 31 0830 Depart for Huntington

Bring your boat, your crew and whatever you wish to enjoy (and possibly share) with fellow members!  
In the event of rain or inclement weather, no raft-up nor cruise

**CONTACT Fred Elliott ([elliottfc.07@gmail.com](mailto:elliottfc.07@gmail.com)) IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND ANY OF THESE EVENTS. LET HIM KNOW IF YOU ARE TRAVELING ABOARD YOUR OWN BOAT.**

**IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND BUT DON'T HAVE A BOAT, NOTIFY FRED. WE'LL TRY TO FIND A SPOT FOR YOU. NO GUARANTEES!**