



Darien Sail & Power Squadron

District 2, United States Power Squadrons®

DSPSCT.org

DSPSCT@gmail.com

July, 2025

Once again, DSPS participated in Darien's Memorial Day Parade. We need more "marchers" for next year.



On Sunday, June 22, 2025, we had an excellent Season Startup Party.

Yes, it was hot, but with a breeze off Holly Pond, as well as Dark & Stormies, a good time was had by all.

If you didn't make it this year, be sure to plan to come next year!

Our next "Dock-n-Dine" outing is next weekend. See page 2 for details.

We're starting to schedule speakers and classes for next year. If there is a subject you'd like us to present, or a speaker you think would be of interest to the Squadron, please let us know at DSPSCT@Gmail.com

And don't forget ...

BOAT/CAMP – July 25th

"It's the best day on the water!" spent with Summer camp kids!
Volunteers on land, boats, Skippers - all are welcome (and needed)!
Contact Gerry Raasch (raaschg@aol.com)



The Bridge

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Cdr Jeff Brown, S

Executive Officer

Lt/C Fred Elliott

Education Officer

open

Treasurer

D/Lt/C John Pedersen, SN

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open

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Jeff Gerwig

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Roger Klein

Rob Steckel

Jim Travis

Marc Cohen

“Let’s Go Boating!!”

The Darien Sail and Power Squadron is known and respected for the excellent educational programs that we offer. We also have a vibrant Speaker Series during the colder months and great land gatherings (Summer Start-up/New Member party, Lobster Bake, Change of Watch to name a few).

But now...*It's time to have some fun on the Water!!* It's time to practice safe boating with a short excursion to points nearby and enjoy a good meal at a notable restaurant!

Our “Dock-n-Dine” dates, locations, and procedures are as follows. Details of where to moor or tie-up and meet will follow as we get closer to the initial date.

July 12th; Captain’s Cove Seaport, Bridgeport A Boardwalk with various shops, lower and upper deck restaurants, a local history exhibit, and amusements for the children! Docks and mooring/launches available. Captainscove.seaport.com

July 26th; Louie’s Dock, Port Washington We return to Louie’s! Ample dock space (arrive early) and great food (seafood, meats, sandwiches). Completely renovated! Louiesince1905.com

August 16th, Danford’s, Port Jefferson An iconic port for boaters, this Summer will see the unveiling of the Black Pearl Seafood Chophouse...“a refined yet relaxed restaurant concept poised to redefine waterfront dining in Port Jefferson.” Danfords.com

All Dock-n-Dine events are for Darien Sail and Power Squadron members and their guests only.

If you wish to attend any of these Dock-n-Dine events, contact Fred Elliott (elliottfc.07@gmail.com). If you plan to go by boat, please let him know. If you wish to attend but do not have a boat (and don’t wish to drive or ferry in the case of Danford’s), also contact Fred. We’ll try to find a boat for you (no guarantees).

It Became the Best Boat

{The third in a series; see *Trident* July 2024 for Part 1 and May 2025 for Part 2}

To recap the progression of boats in our family;

Skimmer was my Dad’s first boat when he was a young boy, spending Summers in Matunuck, RI. A 10’ open boat with an outboard motor.

Skimmer II was our family’s first boat, a 23’ Jersey Skiff. The craft gave us a taste of fishing, boating and water-skiing. And the need for a larger boat.

Skimmer III was the 29’ “dream boat” of my Dad’s at the time, teak decks, dinette that became a bed, vee-bunks, a head, galley and ice box. After a few seasons I think we all decided that this was the worst boat ever built; leaked like a sieve when it rained, engine died whenever my Mother was not aboard and it was the antithesis of seaworthiness.

Skimmer IV was the opposite of *Skimmer III*. Seaworthy cabin cruiser with flying bridge and twin engines, 32’ in length.



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My Dad came home from his visit to the 1966 New York Boat Show simply beaming. Not only did he break his own policy of attending the show but proved why it was a rule; he bought a brand-new boat! Russell Post built sport fisherman style boats, sleek in design with a wide, open cockpit, flying bridge which often including those long, tuna poles extending 15' into the air on a 45 degree angle. This popular Post designed boat I was familiar with was so *not* my Dad!



Skimmer V

He explained to me that he had seen a double-cabin model, where the open cockpit was enclosed and a rear stateroom took its place; the hull design and the cabin was identical to the sport fisherman.

Being the great salesman that Dad was, he convinced Russel Post to include portholes, two on each side, in the bow section of the hull. He wanted additional light and ventilation (the portholes would be in the bow vee-bunk room, the third bunk and the head (bathroom). Post was already not happy about building this second double cabin, because it would slow down his production line. He argued that two frosted-plastic hatch covers would serve the purpose of light and ventilation in the bow, and that adding port holes would slow production. My Dad won. It should be

noted that within a year or so of Post agreeing to portholes, close to 50% of his boats included them. But he never built another double cabin style ever again.

I remember when we went to Mays Landing, New Jersey to inspect the boat before taking delivery, I was truly surprised and excited to see this 37' craft. The hull was painted in "Pelican Blue," a sky-blue shade, with a navy-blue waterline and a red bottom. Everything else was bright white. The transom had the name *Skimmer V* done in a faded yellowy-gold color, with an oversized "S." That got redone over the next winter in navy blue, nicely spaced block letters arching across the wide space. The transom also included a swim platform, and davits that held an 8' pram or dinghy.

Down below, dark blue carpeting was everywhere except in the heads. The galley included a two-burner electric stove, a refrigerator and a table on wheels that you could raise to a height to eat from, or lower to make it a more casual accessory. There were two chairs as well as a three-person couch and a gas-powered generator to provide electricity for the galley, lights, and hot-water heater (yes, hot water on a boat!!). The bright green fresh water-cooled Palmer Marine engines were easily accessible.

Two steps down towards the bow was a bunk, directly across from the head (which had a shower!) and then the Vee-bunks. The vee bunks were high off the floor, providing ample storage space underneath them and the occasional bumped head when getting in and out of the bunk.

The aft cabin, only a \$1,500 add-on, was impressive. At the ripe old age of 12, even I wondered how Post made any money on this boat! The stateroom included two bunks, ample storage and a large head with a shower and closets spanning the full width of the boat. All the cabinet doors and drawers were low-gloss varnish, which accented the bright white nicely. Interior varnish lasts many years without sanding and re-varnishing, thankfully.

Given all the exterior varnish work of *Skimmer IV*, beautiful as it was, Dad had said that *Skimmer V* would have none. As I studied this brand new boat from the bridge, there it was...varnished wood! The bow

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railing was anchored to a narrow, varnished plate of wood that ran almost half the length of the boat! It was Russel Post's way of saying "You want port holes? You got varnish!" That one piece of required maintenance would become a growing source of aggravation over the years, to the point that Dad had someone do creative painting over it.

That first Summer we took our second Power Squadron cruise up the Hudson, going all the way to Montreal to see Expo '67, a true world's fair (open only one year, not two like New York's 1964-1965 Fair). Now 13 years old, I was the one who scrambled up the slippery steel ladders of the locks, with ropes hung across my shoulders, reaching the top and throwing the lines down to my cousin Tim, who accompanied us.

While I don't remember much of the World's Fair, I do remember the ability to purchase fireworks, which I and Cousin Tim did. We "tested" some of them one night, on a barge that was at the marina we were in. The next morning, we were visited by a Canadian Mountie, who informed us that there had been a small fire on that barge. We got a verbal warning and parental admonishing, although we did not have to leave behind our remaining stash. We knew that we would go through customs entering US waters, so we told my 6-year-old brother not to say a word to the customs agent about our fireworks. No sooner than the Inspector boarded our boat did my brother go up to him with his charming smile and ask, "Do you want to see our fireworks?" The gentleman patted him on the head and responded, "No, that's OK." He then asked a couple of routine questions of my Dad and disembarked.

Our traditional "all boys" camping trips took place at Port Jefferson for a few more years. On one of those voyages, we had an engine problem which developed while underway. Both my Dad and his close friend Don had worked at a gas station when they were kids. Engine knowledge was important; Uncle Don fixed this leak in the cooling system by using a wine bottle cork (he imported wines) and bailing wire!

By the time I turned 16, my summer job was working at McMichael's Yacht Yard in Cos Cob, CT, which was on the Mianus River just under the I-95 bridge. We had kept the boat in Mamaroneck for a few years before moving it to McMichael's, primarily to be closer places we liked to do overnights, such as Lloyd or Eaton's Neck, Ziegler's Cove, Oyster Bay and Port Jeff.

I learned a tremendous amount about boat maintenance and painting, which my Dad took full advantage of. One Winter, he had the boat stored indoors at the yard, and my job was to completely re-paint the entire boat. By now *Skimmer V* was seven years old, and Dad wanted a top-notch paint job, which meant primer and finish coats of paint. Using oil-based paint, the "secret ingredient" I learned of was linseed oil. Just the right amount allowed the paint to go on smoothly. Using rapid brush strokes, the paint would set quickly. One had to guard against 'laps,' where new paint was added adjacent to a section that had already set, creating an unevenness. I must say that when the gloss white decks, cabin and the Pelican Blue hull were complete, many people thought the boat was fiberglass. Linseed oil was my secret weapon!

Then I had to do that stupid strip of varnish!

I was now dating girls, and my Dad had an open invitation to me and "whomever I wanted to ask" for a weekend with us on the boat. "what better way to really get to know someone than a weekend on the

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boat?” he would say. While my parents were always gracious, welcoming and accommodating, my younger brother was looking out for me. He had a knack for making comments of disapproval veiled in his charming humor. For example, one girl went to bed with rollers in her hair. The next morning, Jim asked her how the heck she could sleep with those big, round things on her head. Or with another girl, he just would not leave us alone until she finally snapped at him. Many of my Summer Romances ended on a Monday following a weekend on the boat! The only girl who passed my brother’s inspection was the one I married...and he was our Best Man.

Our family took some nice cruises on *Skimmer V*, getting to Shelter and Block Islands, and Martha’s Vineyard. Mom would always plot the course. There was one time, however, when she forgot to add in the variation, and when my Dad passed a buoy and checked it against the chart, he realized what had happened. That was a good lesson for me, because we could have ended up in Portugal if he hadn’t checked!

There was another time when, off New London, a severe fog rolled in, the real “pea soup” variety. We slowed our speed to a bare minimum and I was sent to the bow to both listen and look for anything that could become an obstacle. Enveloped in the eeriness of silence and gray, Dad lost track of where we were. The fog gradually lifted, and I saw seagulls ahead of us. My Dad saw them and began to head towards them. As we edged closer, I turned and called up to him “dad, they’re *standing* on something!” We had managed to get way off course thanks to the “Pea Soup.”

In 1974, the Watch Hill Boat Yard, in Watch Hill, RI became the boat’s home port. My Dad loved that area and decided that the trade-off of a longer car ride to go boating would be rewarded with new areas to explore-Stonington, Newport, Fischer’s Island coupled with easier access to Block Island and the Vineyard. Every Friday afternoon we’d leave home, Dad with his roll of quarters (6 tolls on I-95 between Greenwich and Rhode Island) and deli-made sandwiches for our dinner, at the Long Wharf exit in New Haven (which is now populated with food trucks). While we did do cruises to some of these new ports, most of the time we took the short journey to Napatree Beach, in Watch Hill.

The next generation, our son, boarded *Skimmer V* in 1981. We set his playpen up on the aft deck between two boat boxes, which kept the playpen from sliding if the boat rocked. Both my parents were beaming with joy when the newest Elliott came aboard! We spent the night tied up at our slip, for precautionary reasons in. I think a year later, we did overnights while anchored. Our second son arrived in 1983, and by this time my parents opted to not only keep the boat but also rent a house so that we could all be together in Watch Hill.

By late 1988, both my parents had passed away, and ownership of this now 21-year-old wooden double-cabin boat fell to me. We kept it at a friend’s dock in Darien and did primarily day trips, with our now three sons and friends. Uncle Don’s son (he of “cork and bailing wire” engine repair) and his family joined us on occasions. *Skimmer V* was a boat for generations.

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In late 1990 I had to go to Dayton, Ohio for a three-week training session. The day I stepped off *Skimmer V* was the day the automatic bilge stopped being automatic. Fortunately, some friends noticed that the waterline was no longer visible, and heavy-duty pumps were commandeered from our Yacht Club. The damage was done however and sadly the boat had to be salvaged; a tragic ending for that wonderful boat.

– Fred Elliott



Michael Tougias

October 26th, 2025

We are pleased to announce, in collaboration with the Darien Library, that Michael J Tougias will be our guest speaker on Sunday, October 26th, at 5:00 PM. Mr Tougias is a *New York Times* bestselling author of 30 books for adults and 9 for children. His book *The Finest Hours: The True Story of the U.S. Coast Guard's Most Daring Sea Rescue* (co-written with Casey Sherman) was made into a Disney movie, starring Chris Pine and Casey Affleck. His latest book is *Extreme Survival: Lessons Learned from Those who have Triumphed Against All Odds*. Please RSVP to Mark Bodian at mmarkb1968@gmail.com.



PIRATES OF NEW ENGLAND

November 16, 2025

AHOY - COME ONE COME ALL – for a delightful lecture by Davis Dunavin about the Pirates of New England. Mr. Dunavin will also entertain us with some authentic sea shanties.

This speaker event – open to all DSPS and Norwalk Yacht Club members -- will be held on **November 16** from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Yacht Club, 10 Nathan Hale Dr., Norwalk.

Please RSVP to Mark Bodian at mmarkb1968@gmail.com.